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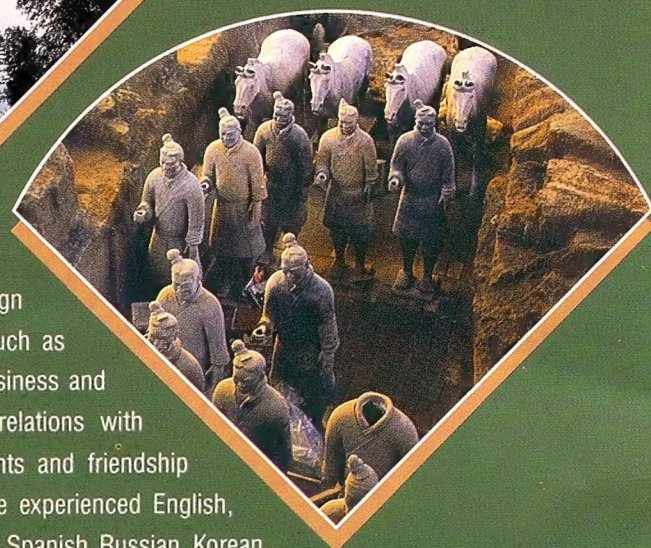
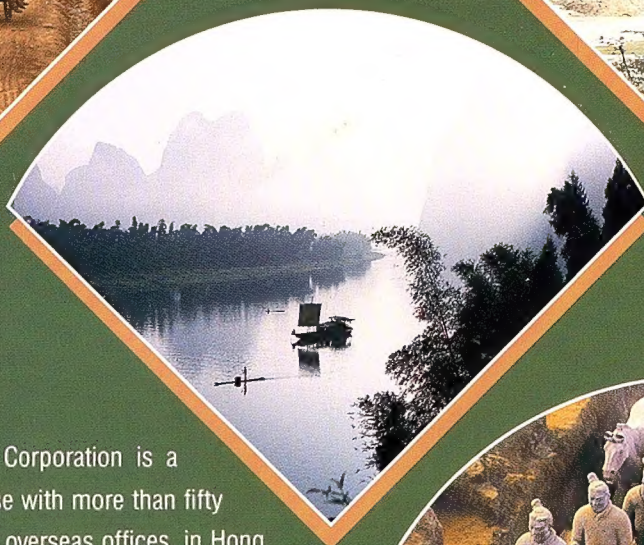
T O U R I S M

YUNNAN'S HENGDUAN RANGE



108

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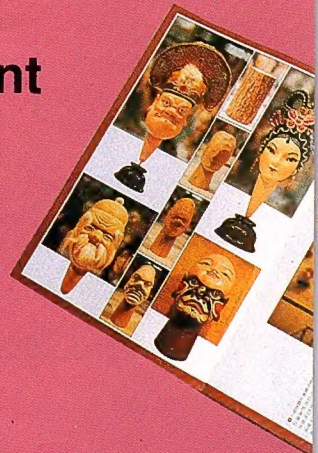
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The photograph shows an open book with a landscape painting. The painting depicts a wide river or floodplain with a small boat in the distance and a traditional hut in the foreground. The text on the book is in Chinese. The book is placed on a red surface.

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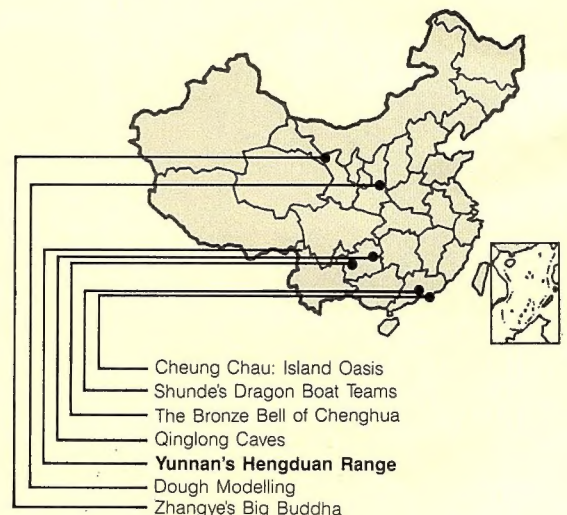
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Front cover: Tibetan women enjoy a soak in a hot spring on the Zhongdian Plateau (by He Guihua)



Of Deep Gorges, Peaks and Plateaux

Located in the far southwest of China, Yunnan Province is a place of extraordinarily rich geographical contrasts. It is a far cry from, say, the lush, tropical jungles of Xishuangbanna in the south to the towering snow peaks, rugged gorges and plateaux of the Hengduan Range in the northwest.

The latter area, on which our focus falls this month, offers exceptional natural drama and beauty. An extension of the eastern Himalayas, the Hengduan Range runs along a north-south axis. Here, river trenches and mountain chains parallel one another closely, as though they have been squeezed hard by a giant hand. The mountains are furrowed by some of Asia's mightiest rivers — the Jinsha (Yangtse), the Lancang (Mekong) and the Nujiang (Salween) — which all rise in eastern Tibet and Qinghai. To the east is the Zhongdian Plateau, centre of the Dêqên Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, with flowery grasslands, thick forests and high lakes surrounded by snow peaks rising to 6,700 odd metres.

Bordered by Burma, Tibet and Sichuan, this region is the home of many Tibetans. But it also contains pockets of minority peoples such as the Nu and Drung who appear to be the sole representatives of their tribes in China. Accessible only via rough tracks blocked by snow for much of the year, they live out their lives according to time-honoured custom, barely affected by the world at large.

One word of caution. Non-Chinese should note that much of this area is not yet open to individual travellers. In addition, given the nature of the terrain, travelling up the Nujiang would entail preparations on an expeditionary scale, as will be clear from our reporter's record of his adventures! We await developments in this beautiful area with interest.

With our ninth anniversary rolling around next month, we are again pleased to offer our readers a special discount for new and repeat subscriptions. At the same time, we have a small request to make of you. We would be most grateful if you could spare a few minutes to complete and return the enclosed questionnaire. This will enable us to take your comments and interests into account as we further improve CHINA TOURISM.

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YUNNAN'S HENGDUAN RANGE



Into the Gorge of the Nujiang

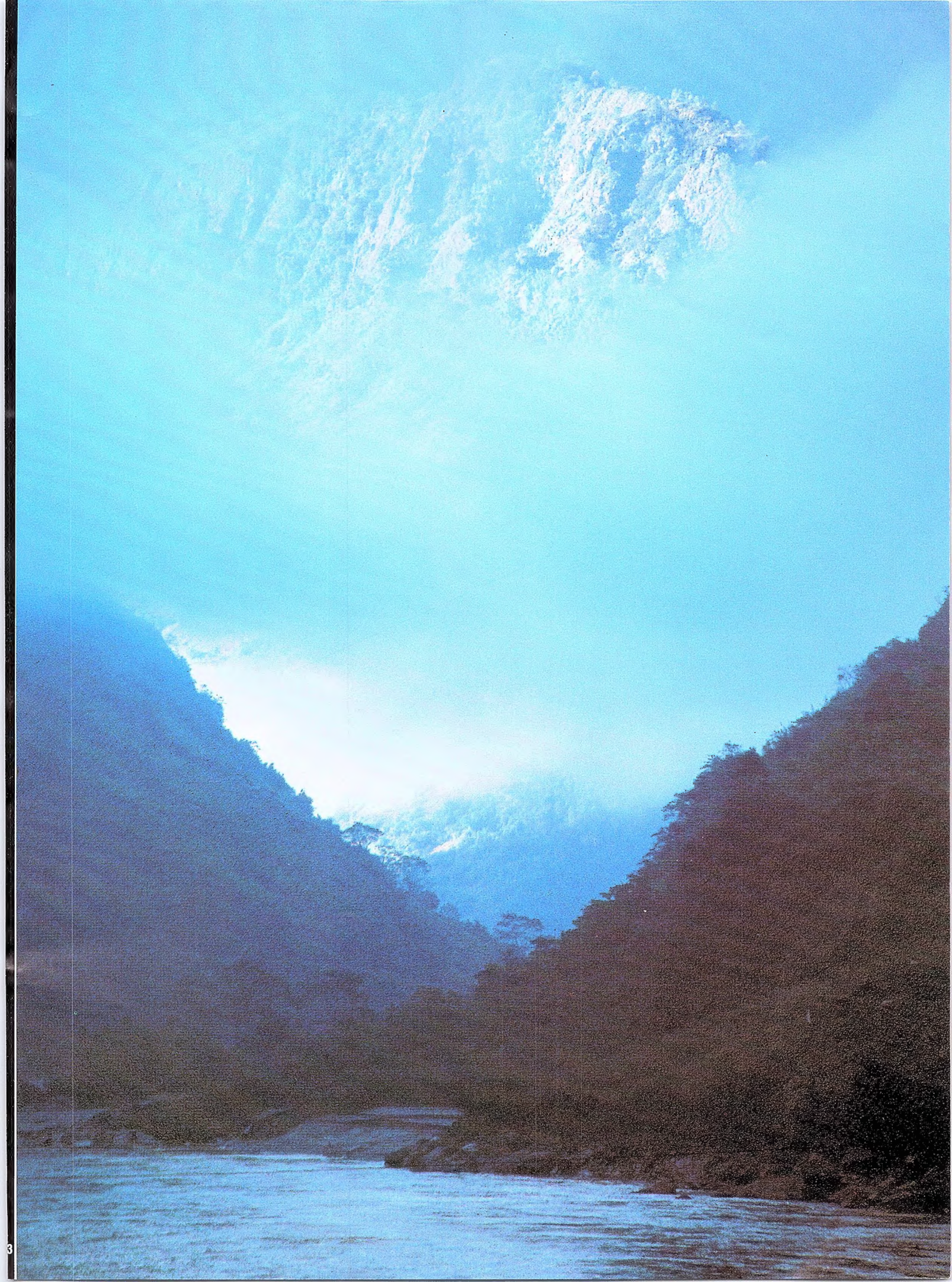
ARTICLE BY DING YUN



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The gorge of the Nujiang at dawn (3, by Wang Miao). Transport and communications are difficult: scaling the Gaoligong Range in the rain (2, by Ding Yun); a typical rattan bridge over the Drungjiang (1, by Xu Puyan).





The majestic Hengduan Mountains sprawl from north to south of western Yunnan Province in China's far southwest. This ramification of lofty mountains is an extension of the Himalayas, spilling over from the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. It is furrowed deeply by the gorges of the rivers Nujiang, Lancang, Jinsha and Drungjiang, the first and last lying hard west along the Sino-Burmese border. These are the upper reaches of some of Asia's most important rivers. The Nujiang becomes the Salween, the Drungjiang is an indirect tributary of the Irrawaddy, the Lancang becomes the Mekong, and the Jinsha becomes the mighty Yangtze, greatest of all of China's rivers and the longest in Asia.

Because of the wild terrain and the remoteness of the region, many places in the northwest of Yunnan

on the Qinghai-Tibet border, it passes through Yunnan from north to south between the Gaoligong and Biluo Mountains in the Hengduan Range, and enters Burma at the southern tip of Yunnan's Luxi County. It then traverses the length of Burma as the Salween before emptying itself into the Andaman Sea at Maulamyaing (Moulmein) east of Rangoon. About 2,013 kilometres of its overall length of 2,800 kilometres is through Chinese territory. Its average width at this point in Yunnan is around one hundred metres, but there is a difference in altitude of over 3,000 metres between the river surface and the peaks on either side.

Bawan is a place where the Dênang people live in a compact community. This ethnic grouping, of whom there are about 10,000,



are not accessible by road to this day. The minority peoples whose home this is, such as the Drung, Nu and Lisu, have for generations kept to their own lifestyles, retaining their unique customs free from any outside influence.

In mid-October last year, three of my friends — as keen as I am on adventure travel — joined me in Dali, the major city of the Dali Bai Autonomous Prefecture in western Yunnan, for a trip which would take us up the gorge of the River Nujiang to visit some of these minority peoples.

Country of the Dênang

Early one drizzly morning, our car headed out of Dali in a southwesterly direction. For a whole day we negotiated the bends of the Yunnan-Burma Highway before reaching Baoshan, a journey of only 190 kilometres. From there it was another sixty kilometres due west to the River Nujiang, where we promptly crossed the Dongfeng Bridge to Bawan on the western bank.

The Nujiang is one of the largest rivers in Yunnan. Having already flowed five hundred kilometres or so from its source on the southern slopes of the Tanggula Mountains





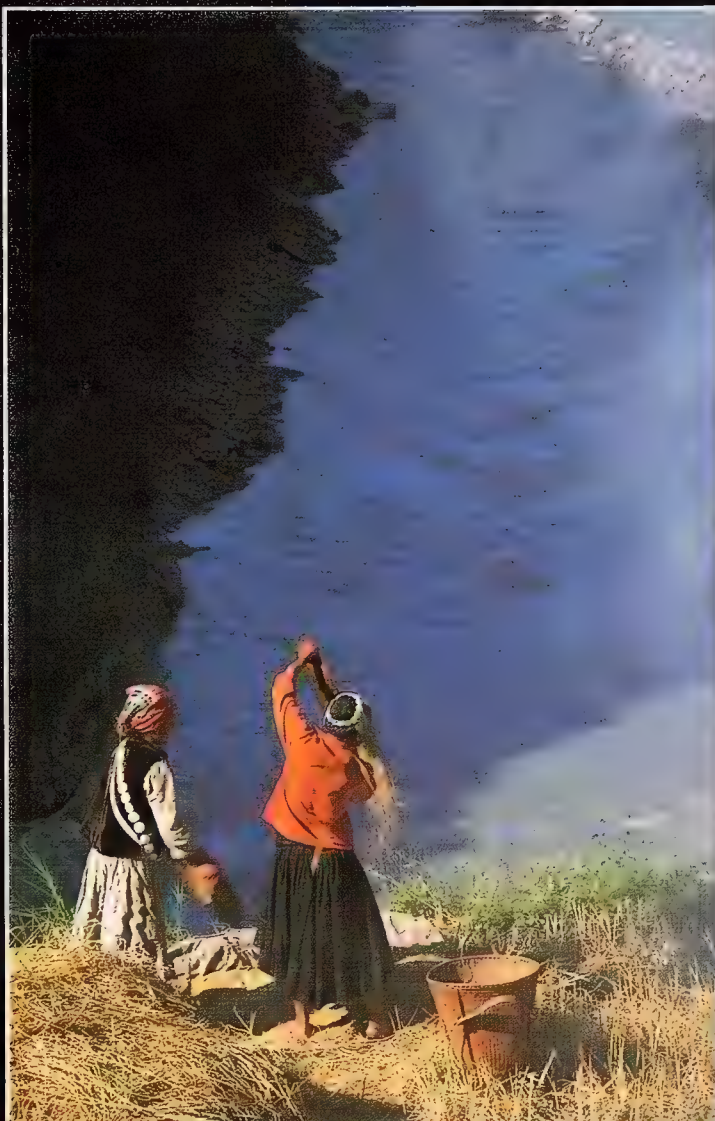
was formerly officially known as the Benglong nationality, but this was amended in September 1985. In their language, *dênang* means 'cave', so it seems they have adopted this name to honour the memory of their cave-dwelling forefathers.

We continued upstream along the west bank of the Nujiang to Naxian, a Dênang village with only sixteen households and a population of around one hundred. In one household several women were sitting in the courtyard, twisting and looping rattan vines dexterously to make the bands or hoops which they traditionally wear by the dozen around their waist and hips.

They have an interesting legend to explain this custom. It is said that the ancestors of the Dênang people developed in a gourd. But no sooner had the female ancestor hatched than she flew away into the sky. Her male counterpart had the ingenious idea of throwing numerous rattan hoops up to catch her and bring her back down to earth. Since then, Dênang women have worn them and, unable to soar



3



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into the sky any more, have had to stay at home and tend to their menfolk!

The Dênang are clearly related to the Va, the former head-hunters from further to the southwest, straddling the Burmese border. And, like the Va, they belong to the Mon-Khmer linguistic family. The Drung, Nu and Lisu whom we would see later, on the other hand, all speak languages of the Tibeto-Burman family.

Next morning we left at an early hour. The winding road, smooth but narrow, ran close to the river bank. The gorge was cold and breezy; the peaks on either side were still enveloped in darkness, while those in the distance were just being touched by the first rays of the sun.

The picturesquely sited Fugong (4, by Fan Xisheng) boasts a photo studio (1, by Wu Jialin). Stilt houses near the Drungjiang (3), Dênang women making rattan hoops (2) and Lisu women winnowing grain (5) (last three by Wang Miao).

The river flowed past almost noiselessly.

At noon we reached Zhikuan, where a fair was in progress. We stopped off to join in the fun. To our surprise, the place was packed with people who must have come from many kilometres around. Many of them were Dai, of the branch known as the Land Dai; their clothing is quite different from that of the Dai of Xishuangbanna in Yunnan's far southwest.

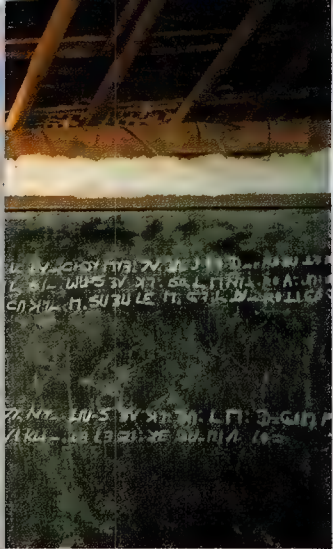
We resumed our journey. In an hour or so we passed through Liuku. Set at an altitude of eight

hundred metres on the western bank of the Nujiang, this is the centre of the Nujiang Lisu Autonomous Prefecture. As we travelled ever further upstream, we could see that the river's volume and current were visibly greater. There were no ferries at this point and indeed no river traffic, as the river was much too turbulent.

Home of the Lisu

Our next destination was Fugong, some 135 kilometres north of Liuku. We were currently travelling on the west bank of the





2



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Nujiang; after many turns, the road crossed a bridge to take us back to the east bank. There seemed to be no end to the mountains: ridge followed ridge followed ridge. The gorge grew ever narrower so that it seemed the precipices on either side must meet overhead. Looking ahead through the car windscreen,

at one moment I saw a dazzlingly blue sky, the next a gathering of

Lisu baby enjoying the easy life (1), and Lisu woman's ornament of pierced and engraved cowrie shells (3). Fugong's chapel (2), 'Flying' over the Nujiang via a cableway (4) (all by Wang Miao).



dark clouds portending a storm. As I watched, there came a clap of thunder and before long there was a downpour. Our driver continued to make the best time he could regardless of the poor visibility, which rather worried me, as I was afraid we might all end up in the raging river below. . . .

Because of the north-south alignment of the Hengduan Range and the extreme depth of the river valleys, the sun only penetrates the Nujiang Gorge for a short time each day. During our sojourn in the gorge, the sun shone after ten each morning, but by three or four o'clock in the afternoon it had disappeared again.

Just after sunset our car slowly drew into Fugong, a county town and another Lisu centre. According to historical records, prior to the eighth century the Lisu lived along the River Yalong in Sichuan and on the west bank of the Jinsha in the

cation of the wearer's status and wealth.

The way a Lisu woman carries her baby really tickled me. The baby is laid in a fine, oblong-shaped bamboo basket; the basket is then fastened by a plaited rattan cord around the mother's forehead. The baby falls asleep contentedly, lulled by the rhythmic rocking as its mother walks along; awake, it can enjoy the views of towering snow-capped mountains and moving clouds from its mother's back. . . .

While in Fugong, I came across a Protestant chapel. It had never even occurred to me to expect such a thing in this out-of-the-way place. Though basic, the chapel was neat and clean and it seemed that there was a congregation for the service every Sunday. It contained a blackboard on which were written phonetic letters (the Lisu script, presumably). I learned that, back in 1929, an American missionary

made his way to Fugong and took great pains to establish this chapel to teach the Christian faith.

Nu 'Flyers'

From Fugong we continued upstream along the east bank of the Nujiang. Looking ahead, I saw mountain after mountain, steep cliffs, and between them the torrent careering headlong like a bolting horse.

As we approached the Gongshan Drung and Nu Autonomous County, we caught sight of a man preparing to cross the river by a cableway. Carrying a load of maize on his back, he nimbly stepped into a sling attached to the wooden block and pulley under the cable. After positioning himself securely, all he needed to do was push off with his legs and there he was, sliding swiftly towards the opposite bank. It looked as close as you can get to flying without a parachute!

At dusk, our car entered Gongshan, the seat of the autonomous county and the end of the road through the Nujiang Gorge. Further north there is only the track beaten out by the horse caravans,



border areas between Sichuan and Yunnan. From the sixteenth century onwards, they migrated to the Lancang and the Nujiang, resulting in wider dispersal and many new but smaller settlements. Still, Yunnan has about half a million Lisu.

With the mountains rising so abruptly on both banks, there is little suitable land available for farming, so the Lisu have reclaimed small plots along the riverbank on which to grow their crops.

With nothing particular to do, I wandered through Fugong's one and only real street to acquaint myself with life in this one-horse town.

The Lisu women of Fugong like to adorn themselves with white shell pieces about three centimetres in diameter, although there are no such shells to be found in the Nujiang area. They buy them from Burma, thread them on a length of cord, and wear them like a holster diagonally over one shoulder. Even their hats (known among them as *oule* hats) are made up of many tiny coral beads and shells, including cowries. I learned later that the number of shells used is an indi-

passable solely between June and October.

The Nu, of whom there are around 22,000, live mainly in villages in the district of Bingzhongluo in the northern part of the



1



3



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4



We happened to be there at a busy time. Gongshan's single street was littered copiously with horse droppings; horse caravans from various places were gathered there. In fact, although we had come to the end of the motor road, we too wanted to continue north to Bingzhongluo. We shuttled back and forth along the street until we finally succeeded in making contact with a team of drovers who agreed to take us with them on their return trip.

With the Horse Caravan

The following day saw us off to Bingzhongluo. Having crossed the crude suspension bridge at the northern end of the main street, we soon left the county seat behind.

autonomous county. According to historical records, the Nu were the earliest inhabitants of the Nujiang Gorge; one thousand years ago they were already settled in the vicinity of the Gaoligong Mountains. Due to the climate of this region, where temperatures may remain below

freezing for as many as five months a year, each Nu family builds a house both up in the mountain and down in the valley. Normally they cultivate the low land, going up higher to harvest mountain products only at the appropriate season.

Mosaic of farmlands at Bingzhongluo (1), where slates are widely used as roofing materials (2) (both by Xu Puyan). Horse caravans on the track to Bingzhongluo (3) may include the occasional donkey (4) (both by Wang Miao).

merchandise, picked their way along the narrow track paved with broken stones, their iron shoes clicking as they hit the rough surface. This monotonous, repetitive sound rang in my ears for most of our journey, somehow serving to emphasize the deep silence of the wilderness through which we passed.

After we had trekked for countless kilometres, a ravine about ten metres across suddenly barred our way. It was spanned by a bridge of wooden planks less than a metre wide. The planks were thick and strong, but there was no railing or handhold of any kind. Moreover the ravine, with a torrent at the bottom, was at least twenty metres deep! I





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5



drew a deep breath and led my horse quickly across the bridge.

That night we put up beside the track in a hamlet named Gekadan. One of the drovers took us to a house where the door was fastened on the outside by a wooden latch. He pushed the door open and made us enter, then proceeded to wash rice and vegetables, chop meat and cook rice, even killing a chicken, as though he were the master of the house.

According to Nu custom, as I soon found out, when a door is left unlocked like that, it means the occupant is out but that any passing traveller, be he total stranger or close acquaintance, is free to go in and make himself at home. However, he may not leave until the owner has come back.

The occupant of this particular house did not return until very late. He was a stout young man, and he had a large chunk of game, still dripping blood, hanging from the barrel of his musket. After some preliminary courtesies, he immediately set to and cooked his kill for us. We sat by the fire until late into the night, chatting over the wine with which we washed down the meat.

Pine stumps in the Gaoligong Range (1), where terrain and weather are equally inhospitable (3) (both by Xu Puyan). Unexpected glacier tongue en route to the Drungjiang (4, by Wu Jialin). The Drung, both women (2) and men (5), cling to their traditional homespun blankets (both by Su Fushan).





2

Beware of the Dog!

As day broke, it was time to resume our journey. Not until evening did we reach Bingzhongluo, less than fifty kilometres from the border with Tibet. In Chinese, Nujiang means 'angry river', but the muddy waters of the river here flowed rather placidly. The large tracts of farmland beside the river were a photogenic mosaic of coffee, where the soil had been recently

Most of the Nu people in the Gongshan Drung and Nu Autonomous County live in adobe houses; bamboo is used as a building material only very rarely. Some of the houses are completely of adobe, others have logs on the upper section. The gabled roofs are made of slates or planks of wood, the floors of wooden planks. The upper floor of such a house is used as living quarters, while domestic

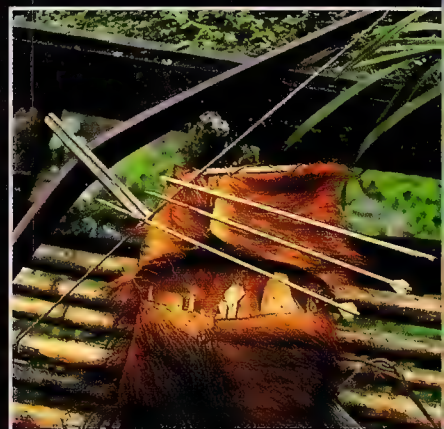
we hurried back to Gongshan along our approach road.

Leeches, Mosquitoes....

Soon afterwards we prepared for another adventure from Gongshan — this time travelling west over the Gaoligong Mountains to the valley of the River Drungjiang on the Sino-Burmese border. This would give us the chance to see China's one and only Drung (sometimes

spelt Dulong) community, which has something like 4,500 members.

This would be a journey of only sixty kilometres, but it involved trekking across snow-capped mountains rising to 4,000 metres above sea-level, making our way through a vast, primeval forest, as well as wading through countless swamps. According to the indigenous people, the area contains four scourges, namely mosquitoes, leeches, caterpillars and poisonous snakes, which pose a problem all year round. As a local saying puts it: 'There is not much for people to eat in the Drungjiang Valley, but plenty to eat people!'



4

turned, or pale green, where there were new shoots.

Strange as it may seem, the most difficult thing to cope with when visiting a Nu household is to guard yourself against sudden attack — from the watch-dog. You must be on the alert as you approach the house and even more careful as you leave. I still remember how we were advised to arm ourselves with a wooden club about one metre long before we went visiting one Nu family. We started to brandish our clubs even before we got near the house in an attempt to protect our legs. Knocking on the door, we struggled to enter. The two young girls sifting maize in the courtyard, all smiles, told us to look around as we liked.



3

The track leading from Gongshan to the Drungjiang Valley was opened up only in 1964. We first hired four Lisu porters and travelled upstream along the River Pula, a tributary of the Nujiang. It was not too tiring a march as the track rose and fell only gently. But then we walked through low scrub to enter virgin forest, where the towering trees kept out the sunlight; the decaying leaves and twigs on the ground, in a layer half a metre thick, were soft and slippery under our feet. While keeping our eyes peeled for snakes, we had to evade blood-sucking leeches and fight off

Successful hunters display their prowess (1); their crossbow and arrows (4, by Ding Yun). Drung family life (2). Sprinkling water on a wooden stake during a ritual (3) (1, 2 and 3 by Su Fushan).

the mosquitoes which attacked us in swarms.

One unusual sight along the track was a glacier cleaving its way through the forest on its descent from a mist-shrouded mountain top.

That day we travelled about fifteen kilometres and, after four in the afternoon, came to a place called Qiqi, at an altitude of 2,000 metres, where we stayed the night.

... and Stinking Swamps

The condition of the track was extremely poor, and it deteriorated further during the following day's trek. In some places there had been landslides, and we had to pick our way carefully through mud and rocks.

Around noon we came to an area of swampland; the path we were on disappeared in the muddy expanse, several hundred metres across, which stank abominably. Still, we had little choice so, lacing

our boots and puttees up extra tightly, we stepped into the nauseating quagmire.

According to our guide, once we were over the next slope, we could call it a day. All we could see up ahead was snow-covered ground, slippery and hard to climb. Braving the gusts of biting wind sweeping the mountains, we had to take to all fours to negotiate the slope, which was several hundred metres long.

At dusk we came to 'Dongsao House' at an altitude of over 3,000 metres — the only shelter available for passers-by, with neither beds nor blankets. Luckily, we met a group of Drungjiang Valley drovers who sat up all night with us around the fire, cracking jokes and finishing off our collective stocks of wine.

Dawn brought a day of incessant rain and a waterlogged and slippery track. But when eventually we reached Moli (Jasmine) Pass, we were rewarded with the sight of the



Drungjiang in the valley below. We could even make out Drung houses, and confidently told each other we should soon be there. Little did we guess that it would take us the whole afternoon until dusk to reach Bapo, the main settlement and administrative centre.

The Drung

The Drungjiang originates in Zayü County in southeastern Tibet. Its upper reach is known as the Kelauluo, which becomes the Drungjiang when it enters the Gongshan region at Dibuli and converges with the River Mabiluo. In Burmese

territory further south it is known as the Nmai Hka, a tributary of the Irrawaddy. The Drungjiang is between thirty and forty metres wide on its passage through the Gongshan Drung and Nu Autonomous County. The Gaoligong Mountains rise to its east, while its

west bank is separated from Burma only by the Dandanglika Mountains. Its descent is precipitous, and it makes a noise like thunder.

Bapo, with a population of over 3,700, is situated right on the riverbank and is the only place in China where the Drung people live in a compact community. In historical Chinese records, this tribe is referred to solely as the 'Qiu'. They have had little contact with the outside world and have thus developed customs and a lifestyle peculiar to themselves.

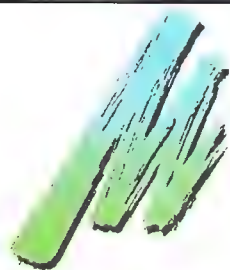
The second day in Bapo, we went out for a stroll. Several women we saw beating gongs wore the striped Drung blanket draped around them and a factory-made cotton towel on the head, the latter an ingenious if obviously untraditional innovation. We found out that these lengths of homespun cloth are their normal wear, although men and women drape them differently. There are variations on the basic technique, but most men seem to wear the blanket draped across the back and tied in a knot (or pinned in some manner) across the chest. A woman, on the other hand, drapes the blanket around her body and under one arm,



knotting the two ends on one shoulder so that the blanket hangs diagonally to her knees.

The stockades of the Drung people are spread all over the land on both sides of the river. They grow maize and potatoes and raise poultry, pigs and cattle, in addition to their hunting and fishing activities. Bridges made from rattan vines are the only means of crossing the river. To make such a bridge, three thin rattan stems are bound together and lashed length after length. Their combined width

Her ornaments cannot conceal her bold spirit (1, by Su Fushan); older Drung women have tattooed faces (4, by Li Yaobo). Drung fishing net (2, by Song Linwu) and Bapo's primary school (3, by Li Dongri). The yellow toads of the Drungjiang die after spawning (5, by Wu Jialin).



YUNNAN'S HENGDUAN RANGE 

Timeless Plateau: Zhongdian

PHOTOS BY WANG MIAO
TEXT BY TAI CHI YIN





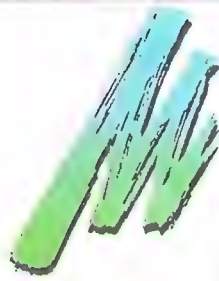
out deep gorges between the parallel mountains. The principal range is the Hengduan, which literally means 'cut off vertically'. An extension of the Himalayas, the Hengduan Range divides into a number of branches, including the Nushan and Yunling Mountains.

One of the high tablelands subordinate to the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau located more in the eastern part of this region is the Zhongdian Plateau. In autumn the plateau, which lies at an average of over 3,000 metres above sea-level, is brilliant with seasonal colour. Outside the town of Zhongdian

itself terraced fields line the sides of the valley, fitfully illuminated by shafts of sunlight forcing their way through the heavy cloud cover. Individual houses, many of them built in the traditional Tibetan flat-roofed style, are dotted in among the fields, their roofs bright with the golden yellow of maize and the green of sundry grasses, telling of a good harvest. The wooden drying racks set up nearby are thick with barley.

Beyond the valley, the weather is visibly colder. The pines and shrubs growing on the slopes are covered with a dusting of hoar-frost. Azaleas in full





In northwestern Yunnan Province, sandwiched between the borders of Burma, Tibet and Sichuan, there lies a region where the results of nature's forces can be seen in all their diversity ... and matchless beauty.

The condensed alternations of mountains and valleys within a relatively narrow span are tangible evidence of the Indian subcontinent's violent collision with Asia some forty to fifty million years ago. The major rivers here — the Nujiang, Lancang, Jinsha and the latter's tributary, the Yalong — flow from north to south, their turbulent waters gouging





bloom on the sheep pastures provide a cheering contrast while, higher up, maple saplings signal in a blaze of reds and oranges. Henbane too flaunts its poisonous presence.

The plateau has long been home to Tibetans, and they have maintained their own ways of life here over generations. There are those who cultivate the land, and those who raise yak, cattle and sheep, often grazing them on the rough highlands free from fences and boundaries. Power lines and improved access apart, time has wrought few changes here.





Photo by Xu Puyan





Photo by Luo Jinhui





YUNNAN'S HENGDUAN RANGE



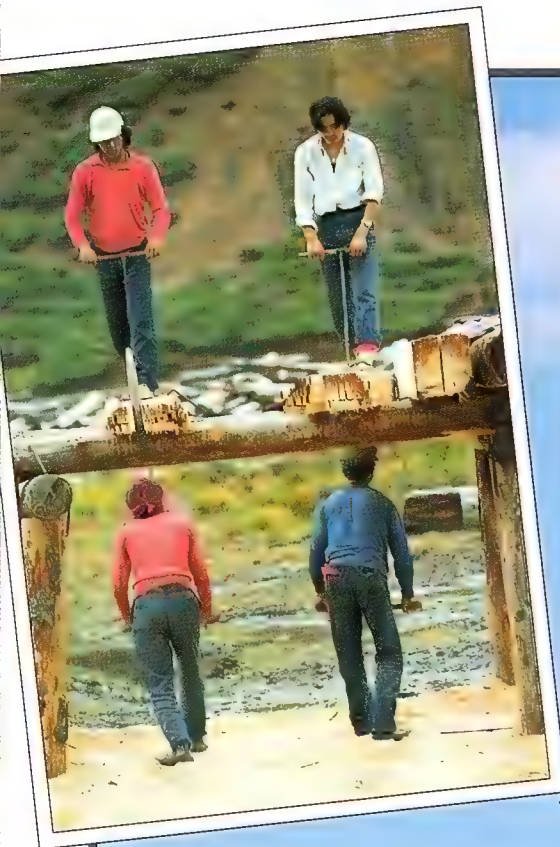
The Tibetans of Dêqên

ARTICLE BY TIAN CUI



Unusually for Tibetans, the women of Benzilan wear pleated skirts (3, by He Guihua); children at play (1 and 2, both by Wang Miao).





1

The Dêqên Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture is situated on a triangular plateau at more than 3,000 metres above sea-level at the point of intersection of Yunnan, Sichuan and Tibet. Surrounded on all sides by towering mountains, the highest being Kawagebo in the Meili Mountains at 6,740 metres, the region is cut off from the outside world during the winter and spring by heavy snow. The majority of its 100,000 or so inhabitants are Tibetan, but there are also small numbers of Lisu, Naxi and Yi people.

Last autumn, before snow sealed off the prefecture, we spent some time there. We were surprised to find that the life and customs of the people of the Dêqên Prefecture differ from those of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. Besides traditional Tibetan customs, they have developed quite a few of their own.

Beside the Jinsha

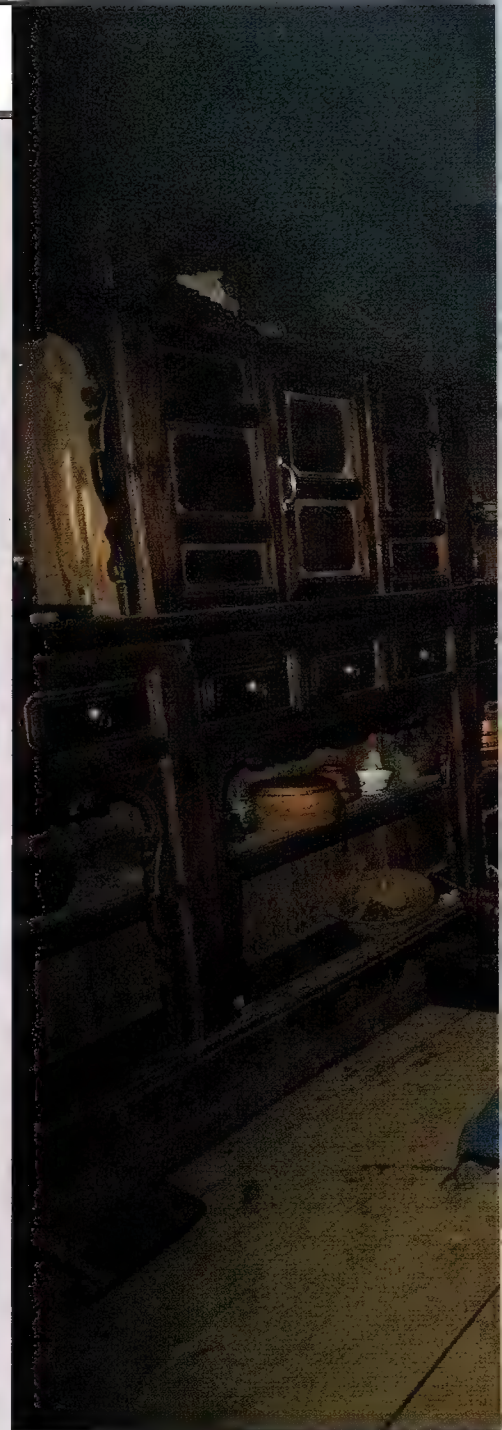
It is over six hundred kilometres from Kunming, capital of Yunnan Province, to Xiaozhongdian, a town in the south of the prefecture. We set out by car via Dali, a necessary stopping point and, after several further stops, arrived two days later at Baihanchang, still 120 kilometres from our destination. A turn-off to the east here would have taken us to Lijiang, the centre of the Lijiang Naxi Autonomous County, but we continued due north.

Our car reached the River Jinsha, the upper reach of the Yangtse. This great river, which rises in the glaciers and snowfields on the northern slopes of the Tanggula Mountains in Qinghai, is known first as the Tongtian, then the Jinsha. After being swollen by large tributaries — the Yalong, Dadu and Minjiang — in Sichuan, it becomes the Yangtse and continues its progress across the very heart of China. It finally exits into the East China Sea north of Shanghai after a course of in all 6,300 kilometres, making it the third longest river in the world.

The Jinsha traverses the Dêqên hinterland. We threaded our way beside it through forests, slowly climbing higher and higher on an increasingly narrow road. At the Hutiao (Tiger Jumping) Gorge we all riveted our eyes on the river, fearing that the car could skid at any moment and tip us over the edge. There is a sheer drop of 3,000 metres and the river is so narrow that legend has it that a tiger escaped from a hunting party with a single bound across the gorge. We heaved a sigh of relief as the road broadened and levelled out as we emerged on to the plateau.

Farming and Forestry

Before us lay a vast stretch of henbane (*Hyoscyamus niger*), a poisonous perennial which turns a fiery red after frost. Together with the dark evergreens in the distance, this formed an entirely different scene from the bare grasslands of Qinghai and Tibet.



After leaving our things in a guest-house in Xiaozhongdian, we went to the nearby village of Bigu, a forestry centre, where we watched workers laboriously sawing logs into planks. All this area boasts extensive stands of conifers.

Though Tibetans tend to be thought of as nomadic or semi-nomadic, the Dêqên Prefecture is more an agricultural than a pastoral area. There is little pasturage for

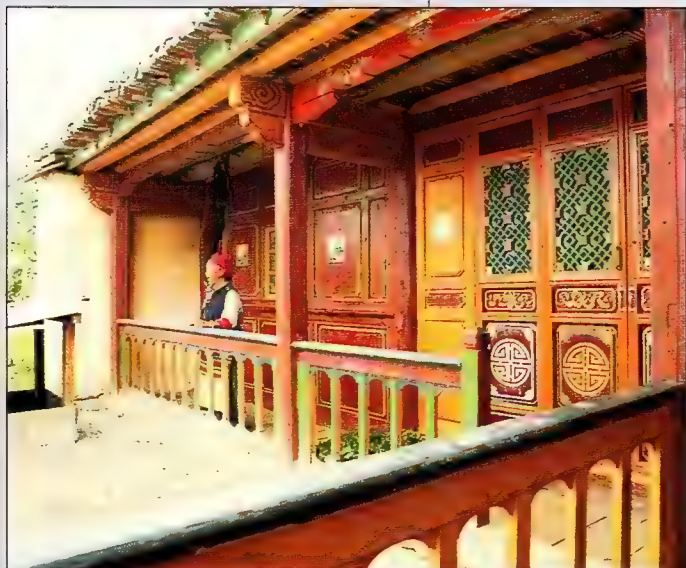


2

Working in the forests (1, by Xu Puyan) and making yak butter tea (5, by Ou Yansheng). Religious emblems decorate the interior (3) and the outer gables (2) (both by Wang Miao). Beautifully finished traditional house in Xiaozhongdian (4, by Fan Xisheng).



3



4



5

cattle, yak or sheep but, with a great river running through fertile land, it is little wonder that farming has developed here. Nevertheless, there are small-scale herdsmen in the area too.

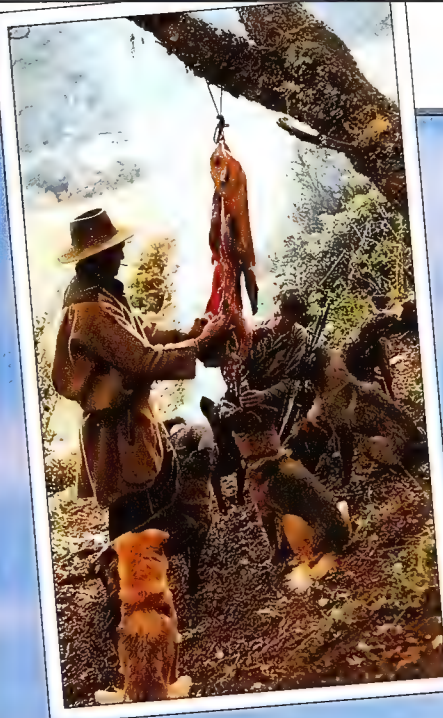
We walked through the fields. With the busy harvesting season just over, ploughing was in progress, while planting had not yet started. We saw people ploughing with the method called 'two oxen carrying a rod', which I had seen in Tibet. Here the oxen were twice as far apart. Also, in addition to the man holding a guiding rein behind the team, there was another man leading them from in front. One farmer told me that they grew only *qingke* (barley) on the plateau, but I saw something like rutabaga or swedes drying at the field edges. This is a secondary staple which is also used, chopped up, for pig feed — something I have never seen in any other region inhabited by Tibetans.

Wooden Houses and Colourful Designs

As we left the fields behind and approached a village, we saw a row of simple Tibetan houses, all made of wood — mainly fir — since the Dêqên Prefecture abounds in timber. Although these houses look very different from the adobe and stone dwellings of Tibet, the layout is similar, with animals on the ground floor and the family's living quarters on the upper floor. Some of the houses, built of unfinished logs, struck us with their rustic look. But others bore evidence of careful design; their wooden planks were planed and polished, and the outer walls were painted with Tibetan religious symbols.

The sound of barking from inside a good-sized house led us into a courtyard where an enormous dog sprang at us. We took to our heels! Fortunately, the dog was tied to a birch tree. The frenzied barking brought out an elderly woman who snapped at the dog and hospitably invited us in. She had a red kerchief on her head, and wore a Tibetan gown fastening to one side. This and her white apron seemed to be the standard local female costume. Her house was a big, wooden, single-storeyed structure. I marvelled at the balustrade at the front and the exquisite green, red and gold carvings on doors and windows, pillars and rafters. I had honestly not expected to find such elaborate work in such a remote place.

As we were leaving, she advised us not to set foot in any household unless we were asked, since everybody kept guard-



dogs which were trained to be extremely unfriendly towards strangers.

Classical Interior

Next we encountered two girls working outside their home wearing more or less the same clothes as our recent hostess, but with a turban-like headdress with wool fringing which emphasized their youthful charm.

We walked over to see what they were doing. They were busily pouring strong tea into narrow churns about one metre high, adding small pieces of rock salt and yak butter, then churning it to make the Tibetan staple, butter tea . . . as they explained to us in stilted Mandarin.

They invited us in to try some tea. Their home was two-storeyed. The top floor was very clean, with painted walls on both sides. The wall behind the open fireplace was painted with a composition in harmonious colours, depicting the eight

sacred emblems of Tibetan Buddhism. An ancient, beautifully finished wooden cupboard was built against another wall. Two braziers were burning in the room, one for pig feed, the other — a three-burnered affair — for cooking tea, vegetables and soup simultaneously for the humans of the household.

Men and Women Bathing Together

The following day we climbed a meandering mountain path and came to Reshuitang (Warm Water Pool), a village where hot springs flowed from crevices in the rocks to form many pools. A lot of people were soaking there in the water. All of us jumped at the idea of taking a warm bath. But when a closer look revealed that men and women shared the same pool, we beat a hasty retreat!

The women and girls watching us with curiosity, their long plaits wound around their heads and their cheeks flushed with the warmth, were certainly not at all camera-shy. One wrinkled old woman, a year-old grandchild in her arms, eased deeper into the comforting water with her eyes closed, enjoying the sensation. She later told us that she went there every morning to soak in the warm water.

Sky Burial?

We started back in the direction of the highway, since we intended to continue by car to Zhongdian. Half-way along the winding path through the forest which would lead us out to the road we suddenly caught the scent of blood. A bend in the path brought us face to face with a big chunk of raw meat hanging from a tree, encircled by a slavering pack of dogs.





3



4

We stopped short, not daring to advance another step, palms clammy with cold sweat and hearts thumping wildly. Had we unsuspectingly run into a Tibetan 'sky burial'? We had been told that this way of exposing the dead on a hillside for the vultures to dispose of, born from the excessive hardness of the ground for burial and the scarcity of wood for cremation, is also common in the Dêqên Prefecture. However, as there are no special platforms

for exposing the dead here and no vultures either, the practice has been amended somewhat; the corpse is dismembered and hung from trees to feed the crows and other birds.

We were still jittery when a man cutting up the meat beckoned us over, calling out: 'We've caught a boar!' The meat would feed two men for two weeks while they hunted in the mountains, and the entrails would be given to their dogs.

An hour later we were in Zhongdian, the main town of the Dêqên Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, located at 3,344 metres above sea-level.

Zhongdian only has two main arteries. One is flanked by modern buildings, most of them containing public offices and facilities, the other by Tibetan homes, some all wood, some wood with tiled roofs, some adobe. All of them have big windows and colourful wooden frames, and balconies and window sills full of potted flowers and plants. Tibetans love flowers, and the people of the Dêqên Prefecture are obviously no exception.

Seeing Off the Bride

Next morning, when I got up and pushed open the window, I found that snow was falling heavily — but the street was full of people. Obviously something special was going on. We hastily made inquiries and found out that it was a wedding procession on its way to pick up a bride and take her to her husband's house.

The hunters' dogs get the remains of the kill (1, by Luo Jinhui). Whitewashed adobe walls, decorated window frames (3) and plenty of potted plants (4) for the Tibetans of Zhongdian; several generations bathe happily together in the hot springs (2) (2, 3 and 4 by Wang Miao).



There were many men and women on horseback, some in red robes with interesting tall, fur-trimmed hats of brocade. But I couldn't see any bridegroom. Someone told me, laughing, that it is not the custom for the groom to go in person to collect the bride and that the person at the head of the procession was the matchmaker.

The procession came to a halt in front of a two-storeyed house and they all crowded up the stairs. An auspicious couplet in Chinese characters was pasted on the door, an apparent combination of Han Chinese and Tibetan wedding customs.

When we finally made it up to the first floor, we saw the matchmaker presenting

a *hata* (a white silk scarf given in respectful greeting) to each of the bride's parents. Then butter tea and food were served. Afterwards, before taking their leave, the members of the bridal escort circled the central pillar of the house, singing and dancing. This Pillar Dance is a tradition of the Dêqên Tibetans. The central pillar is considered a symbol of purity and honour, so this dance around the pillar shows that the bride herself has these qualities.

The excitement rose as the bride emerged in the company of two female attendants. I was disappointed that she covered her face with a kerchief, but the elaborate costumes she and her companions wore kept my eyes busy enough. I was told that the embroidered bag on her arm held her dowry. Surrounded by the escort, she mounted a horse sent for her by the groom and set out on her new life.

Highland Cactus

A change in vegetation became noticeable as we continued northwest from Zhongdian towards the settlement of Benzilan. We drove through the Dêqên



hinterland, re-crossing the Jinsha by the He Long Bridge. The mountains in the distance were almost bare, with just a few dead tree stumps here and there. Yet there were cactuses growing beside the road! Referring to the map we realized we were at the lowest altitude on the plateau, which explained the change. We saw paddy fields beside the river; and on the rooftops rice, still in husk, was laid out to dry. From a vantage point on the mountain we looked down over an expanse of gold.

Most of the houses around Benzilan are flat-roofed and of adobe or a combination of mud and wood. The walls are whitewashed and left plain. The girls of the area wear similar hair ornaments to the ones we had seen in Zhongdian, but everyone here also seemed to have a talisman or amulet around their neck. Over their robes they wore an exquisitely made tunic, opening at the right, in bold red, with a black edging and silver trim. Most striking were the women's

embroidered pleated skirts. This was the first time I had ever seen Tibetan women in such skirts.

Festive Idyll Under Canvas

We struck up a conversation with some of the local girls. They told us that, in Benzilan and Zhongdian, the biggest celebration of the year — lasting several days — is the Duanyang Festival, when there are horseriding, archery and dancing

The bridal escort gathers in the snow (1) to collect the bashful bride and her attendants (2). But first guests are served butter tea by her parents (3) and the escort dances around the central pillar (4) (all by Luo Jinhui). Fox-fur hats are worn by boys (5) as well as men, here preparing for an archery competition (6) (both by Ou Yansheng).



5





contests. This is the festival on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month which, further south in China, is celebrated as the Dragon Boat Festival.

At this festival in the Dêqên Prefecture little white tents and awnings spring up everywhere — in the foothills, in the forests and on the flower-covered meadows — as the Dêqên Tibetans rediscover the pleasures of tent life. In their holiday best, they wander from tent to tent. The men don boots and look out their bows and arrows, or mount their carefully groomed horses, ready to participate in the contests.

In every tent, a table is laid with cakes, other food, butter tea and *chang* (barley beer). Sometimes beautiful carpets are spread on the ground. Strangers are

received with open arms and the feasting lasts all day. In the evening men and women, young and old, gather to perform the *guoxie* dance in circles around the bonfires until they are ready to collapse with fatigue.

Hearing all this, related with great animation, I truly regretted that I had not scheduled my trip to the Dêqên Prefecture for the early summer.

Lamasery That Flew from Afar

We headed on towards our last stop, the town of Dêqên. All along our way, I noticed that the men in this district wore hats made of fox fur, as did many of the boys — this too was something new to me. We stopped the car and made a few inquiries. The popularity of this type of hat, warm and handsome-looking, is apparently due to Dêqên's closeness to Tibet, where there are large numbers of foxes.

We drove up and over snow-covered Mount Taizi and came to a lamasery with an interesting name — Feilai (Flew from Afar) Temple. Though small, this lamasery is famous; a tablet there records the late Panchen Lama's visit to conduct a ceremony in 1987.

There were few worshippers. A Tibetan was doing something to a lacquered wooden container for *zanba*, the roast barley flour which, mixed with butter tea, forms one of the staples of the Tibetan diet. On closer scrutiny, we found he was drawing a dragon on the container. It is fascinating to see that the dragon also has a place in Tibetan culture. This area is in fact fairly sinicized; many of the young people we encountered could speak Mandarin.



After wandering round the lamasery, we hastily continued the rest of the way to Dêqên. This is a tiny county town sprawled around a mountain basin at 3,480 metres. Wherever they go, its inhabitants inevitably have to climb either up or down hill. Here we noticed another local variation in clothing: the Dêqên women wear a colourful striped apron over their long skirts.

Dêqên has but a single guesthouse, with rooms partitioned off by boards. I could hear the conversation of the Tibetan couple in the adjoining room very clearly but, since I couldn't understand a word, it did not prevent me from falling asleep!



Translated by Wang Mingjie



Zanba containers are painted at the lamasery (1, by Fan Xisheng) which was once honoured by a visit from the late Panchen Lama (3). At the Duanyang Festival, even the old folk dance (2, by Ding Yun), and everybody reverts to tent life with gusto (4) (3 and 4 by Ou Yansheng).

3

4



YUNNAN'S HENGDUAN RANGE

Mountain Lamaseries

PHOTOS BY WANG MIAO
ARTICLE BY YIP CHUN YU

The ruins of the Gdangsonzanlin Lamasery are slowly sprouting new halls (3) and new murals (1). The unusual chorten (2, by Xu Puyan). Beyond Benzilan lies the Dongzhulin Lamasery, now well on the way to restoration (4).







One morning we set out by coach from Zhongdian, the main town of the Dêqên Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, along the one and only road which leads northwest to the small town of Dêqên. Zhongdian is situated in the heart of the plateau amid undulating hills. But, since it was early, the mountains were still shrouded in thick mist.

After about four kilometres, we reached the top of a hill. One of my companions suddenly shouted 'Stop! Stop!' and the driver braked immediately, throwing everybody into some confusion. The one who had cried out explained: 'I can see something ahead of us.' Peering through the mist, I too eventually managed to make out a mountain in the shape of a half-unfolded screen. As the mist slowly dissipated further, a cluster of buildings became visible on the mountainside.

I then remembered that, before leaving home, I had read in the *Annals of Yunnan Province* that there was a lamasery tucked away on the Foping (Buddha Screen) Mountain on the outskirts of Zhongdian. In Tibetan this lamasery's name is Gdangsonzanlin, which means 'resting-place of three gods'. As the appearance of the mountain in front coincided more or less exactly with the description given in the annals, I was pretty certain the buildings must be Gdangsonzanlin or Jietang Songlin, the Chinese version of its name.

It is recorded that the lamasery was built in the Ming dynasty. When the fifth Dalai Lama (1617-1682) took control of all political and religious affairs in Tibet, he made this one of the thirteen major monasteries in the area of Tibet and Xikang (a rescinded province). In 1679 he presented a memorial to the Qing government requesting that the lamasery be extended according to the architectural style of the Potala Palace in Lhasa. It was afterwards given the Chinese name of Guihua (Conversion) Temple under Emperor Yongzheng (reign dates 1723-1736). As expansion followed expansion, this gradually became one of the biggest monasteries in the Dêqên area, with more than three thousand monks and lamas at its peak.

As we continued along the road, the complex came more clearly into sight. It looked as though it had been bombed; it was mainly ruins, with just a handful of new halls standing among the rubble and broken masonry. The once famous resting-place of the three gods had certainly been through very hard times, the result of an incident in 1959.

The Great Hall is a recent reconstruction dating from 1982. Inside, I found new murals, meticulously executed in bright colours, depicting stories from the Buddhist scriptures or from Tibetan religious lore. One of the most attractive illustrates a parable of an elephant changing from black to white. On its path to virtue the white elephant becomes a suitable mount for the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra.

Around about, there were buildings under construction for the Kangcan (the local Tibetan Buddhist administration) as well as meditation rooms and sleeping quarters for the monks. Today, many young men from nearby families have joined the lamasery. Looking at these lads full of vigour and vitality, I felt sure it wouldn't be long before the lamasery again took its rightful place as the centre of religious activities in the Dêqên region.



On the slopes near the lamasery we admired the piles of mani stones. *Mani* in Tibetan means a flat stone engraved with a religious inscription or a representation of Buddha or another important figure. It is a Tibetan tradition to deposit mani stones in places considered sacred, and the piles or walls formed in themselves carry an aura of sanctity.

One mani pile we examined was actually a chorten, a primitive stupa. The stones were massed around a wooden pole like a totem pole on a square base, displaying a stylized sun and moon very similar to the symbols painted on some Tibetan house doors. The different parts of a chorten have specific meanings associated with the elements: the square base stands for earth, the shaft for fire, the crescent moon for air and the sun for space. Clearly identifiable

on the wooden shaft were thirteen rings representing the thirteen steps to enlightenment. Despite my various earlier trips to regions inhabited by Tibetans, this was the first time I had ever seen this particular arrangement. It may well be unique, or at least unique to this area.

As I stood there, I noticed that all the Tibetans passing by circumambulated the chorten once in a clockwise direction to acquire merit. Watching in silence, I listened as their monotonous, repeated, hum-like chant of 'Om mani padme hum, om mani....' spread far and wide across the mountains.

We continued our interrupted journey towards Dêqên. The coach crossed several ridges, all at around four to five thousand metres above sea-level. Reaching Benzilan, a pleasant farming settlement

beside the River Jinsha, which here forms the border with Sichuan Province, the road turns away from the river and runs northwest towards the snow-capped Meili Range covered in dense forests. The higher we drove, the fiercer the wind. After about twenty kilometres, a majestic shadow was thrown across our coach windscreen ... a massive building surrounded by a good, strong wall.

This was the Dongzhulin (East Bamboo Grove) Lamasery, which was created in the winter of 1761 by merging three small *gompas* or hermitages — Kongsu, Zhiyong and Shusong Gongba. The wall enclosed a group of flat-roofed adobe buildings running up the slope of the hill like a staircase. The outer walls of the houses were washed a creamy white and the gilt bronze tiles above the window openings glittered in the sunshine, reminding me of the golden roofs of the holy places of Lhasa. Dongzhulin is not large as lamaseries go. It has none of the breathtaking beauty and magnificence of the major sites of the Tibetan Buddhist faith on the Tibet-Qinghai Plateau. Everything is very colourful, to be sure, but there is no extravagance. In fact, the lamasery radiates a spare beauty which other monasteries cannot emulate.

With the permission of the Living Buddha Kada, the canon master, our group stayed the night in a room within the Great Hall. Before we retired for the night, a lama told us with a smile that there would be a religious festival the following morning.

Hardly had I laid down than I heard songs and music from outside, which became louder and louder. Curious, I groped my way from the dark, unfamiliar room. Outside I could dimly see dozens of boys and girls dancing in a circle, singing all the while. A dozen young monks stood around listening and laughing merrily. I was later told that this formed a sort of prelude to the local religious ceremony called the Sengzhi Festival, when it is the custom to dance before the lamasery until dawn.

The festival proper started at nine o'clock the next morning with the *qamo*, the Sorcerers' Dance. This is a religious dance-drama for which monks and lamas put on wooden masks and costumes representing various gods and demons and, in dance form, display their attributes and deeds. Arriving in the monastery courtyard, I saw that a wide circle had been drawn on the ground, and monks in red robes sat around its perimeter to keep order. Outside the circle a big crowd of Tibetans had gathered in their best clothes, some overflowing into the buildings or invading the nearby rooftops for a better view.

A monks' orchestra started to play traditional music on one side of the courtyard. The music was very slow and now, to the beat of the drums, masked lamas emerged from the monastery buildings and formed a circle. They danced in a clockwise direction presenting, among other things, the Demons' Dance, the Skeleton Dance and the Dance of the Protectors of the Faith.

This dance during the Sengzhi Festival has a history of over 320 years and is usually performed on the twenty-seventh, twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth days of the eighth lunar month, in other words, in late autumn. Its basic purpose is to chase away demons and ensure good luck. Discontinued in the 1950s, it has only recently been reinstated. We all felt highly privileged to have had the chance to enjoy the measured steps of the Sorcerers' Dance and experience the atmosphere of a Tibetan religious celebration on the plateau.

Translated by Yu Zai Xin



2

C

Embroideries and brocade hangings at Dongzhulin (1); and masks (3) used for the Sorcerers' Dance, which is staged on certain days during the Sengzhi Festival (2, by Luo Jinhui).



3



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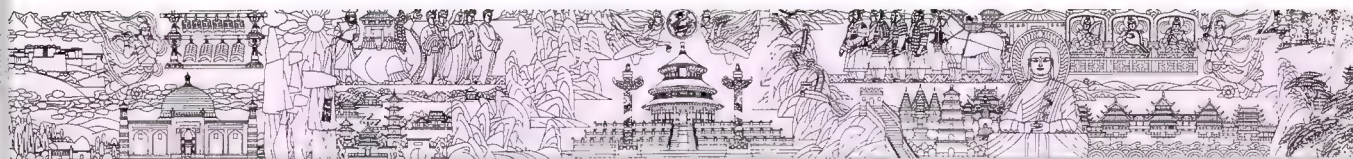
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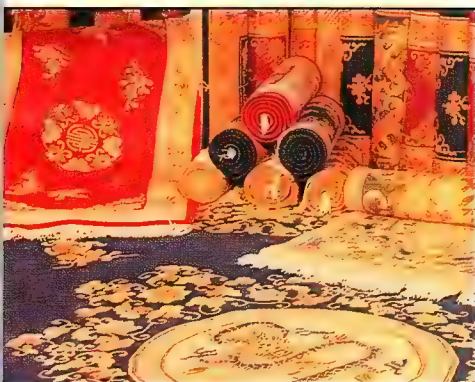
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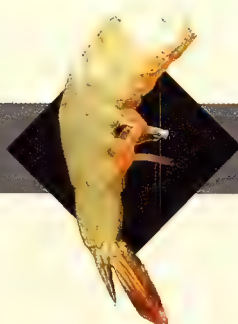
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ZHANGYE'S BIG BUDDHA

PHOTOS BY ZHANG BAOXI
ARTICLE BY GU YUE



On a cool morning I took the train from Lanzhou, capital of Gansu Province, and travelled into the heart of the Gansu Corridor, that flat, fertile strip of land flanked by mountains and deserts which forms a natural passage towards the northwest.

My destination was Zhangye, located near the border with the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. Originally the site of a military command established in the Gansu Corridor by the Han dynasty (206 B.C. - A.D. 220), when it was known as Ganzhou or Kanchow, it flourished as an oasis on the East-West trade route known as the Silk Road until the eighth century. When the Uygur tribes were scattered in the ninth century this became one of their principal states, but was over-run by the amalgamation of northern tribes known as the Western Xia in 1028. During the Yuan dynasty, it became the provincial capital of Gansu.

The Venetian traveller Marco Polo (1254-1324) stayed in Zhangye for a year. In his *Travels*, the record of his adventures, he refers to it as 'Kan-chau': 'Let us now pass on to Kan-chau, a large and splendid city in Tangut proper and the capital of the whole province.... (The idolators) have a vast quantity of idols; and I can assure you that some are as much as ten paces in length.... These huge idols are recumbent, and groups of lesser ones are set around about them and seem to be doing them humble obeisance.'

In this passage, Marco Polo touches on the reason for my visit and Zhangye's major attraction — its enormous Sleeping Buddha. The statue, the largest of its kind inside a religious building in China, is housed in the southwestern part of the city in the Big Buddha Temple, which was once one of the principal places of worship of the Western Xia.

With a total length of 34.5 metres, the Sleeping Buddha has shoulders 7.5 metres across and feet 5.4 metres long. Head to the north, feet to the south, and facing the west, the Buddha lies on his side on a 'seven-treasure' bed in the centre of the main hall. The posture is completely in conformity with the description given in the scriptures: Buddha's right cheek is resting on his right hand, his left arm is stretched down his left leg, while one foot rests on top

Entering Nirvana (1), the Sleeping Buddha smiles serenely in the Big Buddha Temple (2, by Ma Yiu Chun).



of the other. The statue is modelled of clay on a wooden framework and is gilded, with the addition of delicate colours. It was designed in such a way that part of its face can be seen from any angle, giving an effect of mystery and infinite grandeur.

Buddha Entering Nirvana

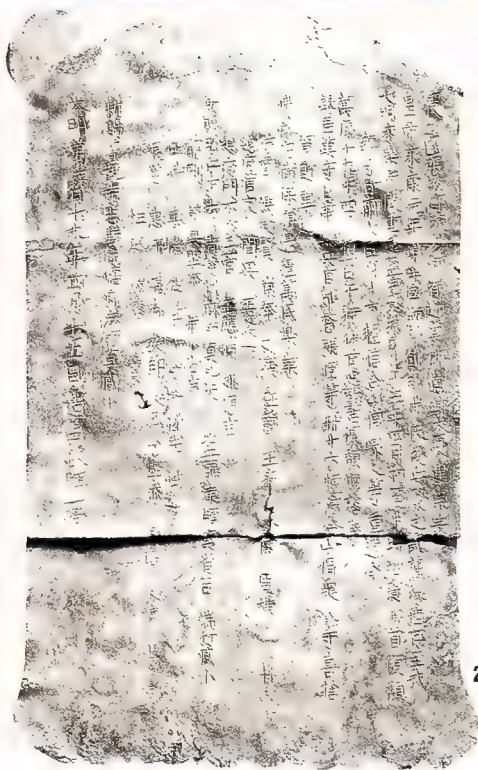
Incorporating the arts of India and Central Asia which it found in place in the territories it conquered to the northwest, the Western Xia dynasty also adopted elements of the culture of the Tang and Song dynasties. The original Western Xia Sleeping Buddha is said to have been particularly fine as regards the execution of its draperies and ornaments. However, earthquakes damaged the statue's neck and body and it was restored and repaired repeatedly during the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties. What we see today is just the latest restoration, although no doubt the glories of the original work still repose below the surface layers.

The famous 'Sleeping Buddha' pose shows Sakyamuni in deep meditation as he prepares to enter Nirvana. This has been a favourite Buddhist theme since early times, appearing in the Gandharan sculptures of northern India — when Buddha was first personified in art — around the second century. Eventually reaching China via the Western Regions, that is, Central Asia and the area now known as Xinjiang, the Sleeping Buddha made its appearance in Chinese sculpture and in murals and paintings.

According to Buddhist lore Sakyamuni — the historical Buddha — fell seriously ill in 485 B.C. at the age of about eighty, when he took a bath in a river at Kushinagara near the present-day village of Kasia east of Gorakhpur in northern India. A charpoy was set up for him in a place with two sal trees growing on all four sides. Realizing that the end was near, Sakyamuni lay down fully conscious in the position described. For the last time he gathered his disciples around and exhorted them, his last words being: 'All composite things must pass away. Strive onward vigilantly! And thus he died. When his disciples approached, they found him with his eyes half-closed, a slight, serene smile on his lips. His expression showed his release from the bonds of life and his entry into Nirvana, the extinction of self, the supreme goal of Buddhism.

Behind the statue stand ten disciples, with eighteen arhats (worthy ones), known in Chinese as *luohan*, in subordinate positions at both ends of the hall. The group forms a harmonious whole around the Sleeping Buddha. The disciples are all executed in very much the same manner with a consequent lack of individuality. However, a more realistic approach is shown in the arhats, which each have their own traits, physique and posture. Their faces are full of character, with forceful lines and marked features, conveying spirit, strength and determination.

The walls of the Big Buddha Hall are largely decorated with murals. Apart from *dvarapalas* and *devas*, there is also a scene from *Journey to the West*. The latter, though by no means a masterpiece, is interesting because of its associations, painted as it is in a place on the very road to the West along which Xuan Zang, the Tang-dynasty monk, made his way to India to collect and study the Buddhist scriptures.



None of the murals and paintings here are originals, having been touched up or completely repainted during the Qing dynasty.

Imperial Associations

The Big Buddha Temple was in fact built in 1098 during the Western Xia dynasty (1038-1227), when it was known as the Kasyapa Tathagata Temple. It too has been repaired on numerous occasions. It now consists of three buildings: the Big Buddha Hall, the Tripitaka Pavilion — the sutra library — and an adobe pagoda. As we see it today, the Big Buddha Hall is a two-storeyed, nine-ridge-roofed building, forty-nine metres wide, covering a total of 1,370 square metres. This is a Qing-dynasty reconstruction dating from the time of Emperor Qianlong (reign dates 1739-1796).

The Western Xia rulers were fervent Buddhists and spared no effort to propagate the religion. From Li Yuanhao, the founder of the dynasty, to his successors, all of them utilized their privileged political and economic status to acquire Buddhist texts from their contemporaries, the Song and Liao dynasties. These they had translated into Tangut, the Western Xia language, so that they would be accessible to the common people, too.

At first the Big Buddha Temple served as a temporary royal residence. One empress dowager of the Western Xia often travelled from the capital at Xingqing (now Yinchuan in the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region) to stay there, worshipping Buddha and praying for peace in the domain. But the imperial connections continued beyond the Western Xia. According to legend Kublai Khan (1162-1227), founder of the Yuan dynasty, was born here and, when his mother Bieji died in battle, her corpse was laid out in state at the temple. In 1276, when Mongol troops attacked and seized Lin'an (now Hangzhou in Zhejiang), capital of the Southern Song, they took prisoner the six-year-old imperial prince Zhao Pi, and sent him to Zhangye. Later he entered the monastic community and spent the rest of his life at the Big Buddha Temple.

Due to its position on the Silk Road, Zhangye and its temple must have seen a lot of emissaries and diplomats, merchants and travellers, as well as soldiers and armies passing through in times gone by. In 1971 a stone case was found in the base of the ruins of Jinta (Golden Pagoda) Hall. The case had apparently been laid there in 1441, the sixth year of Emperor Zhengtong's reign, when the hall was built. The case contained a silver casket, jade carvings, pearls and coins. Of the latter, six were Persian silver coins minted in the Sassanian dynasty (226-651) and bearing the head of Khosrow I. These treasures may have been donated to the monastery, used in barter trade, or merely lost or left behind. But the silver coins, in particular, provide tangible evidence of the trade between China and Persia and help us to visualize the cosmopolitan flow of peoples along the trade routes in the past.

Translated by He Fei

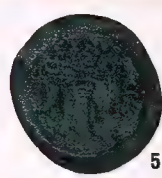
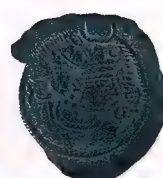
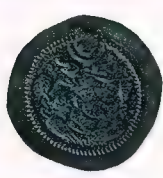
Carved board (1, by Ma Yiu Chun), bronze plaque commemorating the Big Buddha Hall's reconstruction (2), and silver coins from Persia (5). Qing-dynasty mural of Xuan Zang's fabled journey to India (3). Arhat (4) and the immense Sleeping Buddha (6, by Zhang Runxiu).



3



4



5

6



Shunde's Dragon Boat Teams—Best in the World?

PHOTOS BY PENG ZHENG

ARTICLE BY YIP CHUN YU



Ever since Hong Kong began to host the International Invitation Dragon Boat Races some years ago, dragon boat racing has gained in popularity around the world. Teams from countries such as Japan, New Zealand, Canada, Singapore, Australia, the United States and Indonesia have come to challenge the leading Chinese representatives. However, as the land in which the whole thing started, China has had around 2,500 years' experience in the sport and has no intention of yielding its supremacy. Every year it despatches its strongest teams, those from Shunde in southern Guangdong Province, to compete in international contests and, exhibiting amazing skill and stamina, they have to date won them all.

To discover the secret of how they manage to keep up this astonishing record, I visited the Shunde teams on their home ground.



2

Network of Delta Waterways

A county with a total area of 800 square kilometres, Shunde sits on an alluvial plain in the delta of the Zhujiang (Pearl River). It is traversed by ten major rivers and more than 160 tributaries, as well as innumerable smaller watercourses — in fact, one-third of Shunde's surface area is said to be water.

From the mid-fourteenth century onwards, the people of Shunde have been building dykes to trap and control the water and digging ponds in which they breed fish for food. The soil excavated is used to form embankments or spread out to make fertile fields where crops such as mulberry trees, sugarcane, bananas and lychees are planted.

Once I arrived in Shunde County, I was taken to the village of Chongkou and introduced to Liu Jinghui, an impressively tanned farmer. Liu and his wife earn their living by selling the small fry which they breed in a 0.133-hectare pond situated not far from their home.

As Liu was going to get some fish from the pond that very day, I volunteered to go with him. Chongkou is surrounded by water, and rowing boats are the most common means for people to go to work or simply get from place to place.



3

Sitting there in the boat, I watched Liu. He was using a single paddle of the type used to propel dragon boats. The small boat turned and stopped with such precision it seemed as if it could read Liu's mind. The technical expertise of these people, for whom travelling by water is second nature, is really admirable and the display of medals and trophies won in domestic and international dragon boat races which I later saw set beneath the ancestral shrine in Liu's house came as no surprise.

When we arrived at the fish pond, Liu waded in and plucked no small quantity of snakehead mullet from the water, using his bare hands.

Practice Makes Perfect

The river on the doorstep of Shunde's Agricultural Technical Training College is where the dragon boat teams train. Groups of men and women had already gathered by the time I got there. The women were as well-built as the men. Frequent training and drills have not only strengthened their hands, arms and legs, but their entire body. In addition, there is the factor that these athletes have no problems as regards nutrition — not for nothing is fertile Shunde known as the 'land of rice and fish'!

The men and women's teams jumped into their boats drawn up against the shore as soon as the coach blew his whistle. At a second blast of the whistle, the boats shot out into the middle of the river like arrows released from the bow. The coach quickly boarded a speedboat and followed them.

Crouching on the bank, I focused all my attention on the teams' rowing technique. The rowers braced their feet against the plates in front of their seats and stretched their legs, pushing as they gripped the oars and rowed in time to the drum and gong. Their oars moved in unison as though operated by a single person (there are anything from twenty to forty rowers and over in a dragon boat in addition to the helmsman, the drummer and, sometimes, a gong-beater).



4

Talking to team members later, I discovered that even the position of the oar in the water has to be precise. If the oar is pushed in too deep, this saps the energy and is a waste of time, while if the oar penetration is too shallow, not enough force is generated. Obviously, there is very much more to this than first meets the eye!

A team at practice (1) for the series of races held during the Dragon Boat Festival (3). Rowers rest, well protected from the sun (2). Medals and mementoes of dragon boat races merit a place on the family shrine (4).



1



2

The teams practised all morning until, finally, the coach signalled that they could come ashore. The dragon boats turned and raced towards the jetty at full speed. There was still no sign of them slowing down one hundred metres from land. But then, just as we watchers were starting to worry that they would crash into the bank, there came a whistle from the shore and the teams plunged their oars deep into the water and leaned backwards as one. The boats stopped dead, in a flurry of water.

Part of Shunde Life

The actual Dragon Boat Festival falls on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month; Duanwu (Double Five) is its more correct Chinese name. For two weeks around the day, which normally

falls in June, races and heats of various levels and over varying distances — up to around 1,000 metres — are held in the waterways around Shunde. Actually, small contests are common in villages in the area throughout the year. However, the boats used for these minor events are not dragon boats but the ordinary rowing boats in everyday use.

The origins of the Dragon Boat Festival in China are complex and obscure, some ascribing the festivities to ancient totem worship of the powerful dragon, long associated with the waters, others to the memory of the poet Qu Yuan (340-278 B.C.), who drowned himself in despair at the fate of the State of Chu. It is certainly difficult to trace the history of the races in Shunde. Some of the local people told me that

there is a stone tablet among those kept in the Xishan Temple in Daliang, the county town of Shunde, which dates from the time of Emperor Kangxi (reign dates 1662-1722) of the Qing dynasty. It carries the inscription 'Triumph Over All Dragons'. Erected to commemorate the performance of a dragon boat team from the township of Xingtian, this tablet can be considered proof of the long traditions of such races in Shunde County.

I was delighted to be able to witness the big race in Shunde on the day of the Dragon Boat Festival. After eating their special 'dragon boat rice', villagers rushed in their rowing boats to pick the best vantage point. Some of the older people, however, preferred to stay on the bank so that they could roll up their trouser-legs and dip their feet in the cooling waters while enjoying the 'dispute of the dragons'.

Suddenly I got the point. Of course it was only natural that the Shunde dragon boat teams were able to scoop all the honours! Such races, which Hongkongers see only at one special festival each year, are an integral part of life for the people of Shunde.

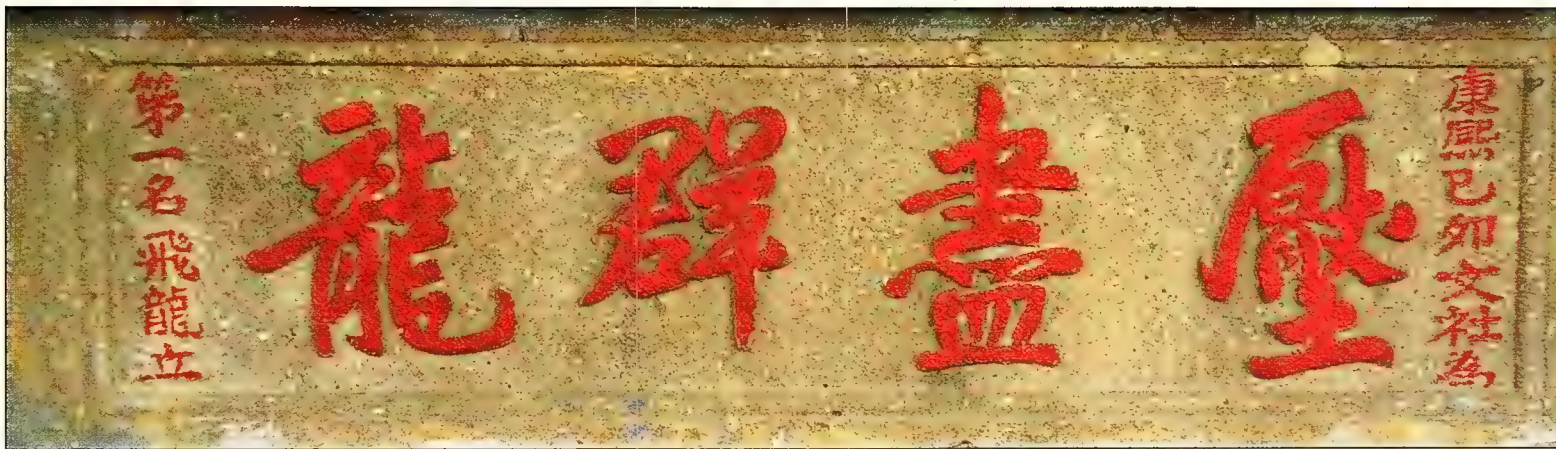


Translated by Ursula Yeung

The Shunde women's team exults at coming first in a Hong Kong invitation race (1, 3). Dragon boat teams from various provinces gather to compete (5), but the Shunde rowers' living environment gives them the edge (2). Daliang's Qing-dynasty inscription (4).



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The Art of Dough Modelling

PHOTOS & ARTICLE
BY LI LEJIAN



One of the staple foods of the people of northern China is wheat flour, which they knead into dough and then steam, producing what is called *mantou* or steamed bread. But the women of Luochuan County in northern Shaanxi turn ordinary *mantou* dough into a unique kind of folk art. On special occasions, they model and colour dough pieces to suit the atmosphere of the festival: wedding ceremony, funeral, sacrificial rite and so on. The local people call this *mianhua* — literally translated, 'floral dough', the many forms of which reflect local customs both ancient and modern.

The designs of the floral dough of Luochuan very often have some quite specific meaning. *Guan'er*, for example, usually made at the Qingming Festival, are used to commemorate a historical figure. Little birds are modelled on top of and around spherical pieces of dough (the size of a bread roll) in honour of a man called Jie Zitui. The story is set in the State of Jin during the Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 B.C.) and goes like this: The prince of the Jin fled from the state and lived in exile abroad. His loyal subordinate, Jie Zitui, accompanied him. When the prince returned home and assumed the throne, he offered Jie a high position at court. But Jie, not desiring power, refused and fled into the mountains with his mother to avoid trouble. Enraged,



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Dough shapes as gifts for children (1, 2) and a dragon and phoenix for newly-weds (3, 4). Less elaborate gong'er offerings (5, 7, 8). Renkou guan'er for a boy (6), while rabbits are again for newly-weds (9, 10, 12). A guan'er (11).



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the new king ordered the mountain where Jie was hiding to be set on fire so that he would be forced out. But Jie threw himself into the flames, preferring to die rather than become an official. When his corpse was discovered, his head was surrounded by protective birds. Since then it has gradually become the local custom to make *guan'er* decorated with many



Renkou guan'er for a girl (1), guan'er symbolizing the head of Jie Zitui (2). A tiger for courage (3), and a colourful gong'er (4).

birds at the Qingming Festival. This type of floral dough is used as a sacrificial offering at the graves of the deceased on this occasion.

Another type of floral dough made at the Qingming Festival is called *renkou guan'er*. The patterns are modified to suit the recipient. If this is a boy, the motifs are usually books, brushes, ink-sticks, paper, inkstones and so on: the boy is expected to become an educated man. If the recipient is a girl, the motifs tend to be scissors, needles, thread, etc., as a girl is traditionally expected to be good at embroidery and housework.

Newly-weds are often given floral dough in the shape of dragons, phoenixes and longevity locks with colourful little flowers on them to express the hope that they will live happily to a good ripe age. Or a small dough tiger may be linked to a dough rabbit by means of a red cord, and placed on top of the triangle made by leaning two pillows on end against each other on the marital bed. This expresses the wish that the couple will have many children. People often take miniature dough tigers or birds with them as presents for the children when visiting friends or relatives. The underlying hope is that the children will be as brave as tigers and as nimble as birds.

Gong'er, yet another kind, is used as sacrificial offerings to the deceased. It is also called *laomo*, and is quite similar in shape to the *guan'er* made at Qingming. The *gong'er* designs are mostly of flowers and foliage, but they are not as carefully formed as those on the *guan'er*.



The instruments used for making floral dough are simple. All that is needed are a pair of scissors, a comb, a soup spoon and a pair of chopsticks. The dough is first modelled in the form of animals or flowers. A comb is then used to press the dough to produce the effect of animals' hair or birds' feathers, while a spoon is used for the scales of a fish or dragon, and a pair of scissors to snip out small birds' beaks and fish tails. Many people like to mix dye into the dough or paint the modelled dough before steaming it so as to make the shapes even more colourful and attractive.

Translated by Wang Mingjie



The main entrance to Wanshou Palace (by Wang Miao)

THE ANCIENT ARCHITECTURAL COMPLEX AT QINGLONG CAVES

ARTICLE BY HE HUAIBO

The River Wuyang winds quietly through Zhenyuan in eastern Guizhou. Alighting from the train, I followed the south bank of the river in quest of Zhonghe Cliff. In the distance I could see peaks enfolding the ancient architectural complex at the Qinglong Caves like the petals of a flower.

Looking up from Zhusheng Bridge at the foot of the cliff, I noted how dangerously steep and precipitous the terrain was. The foundations of many of the splendid buildings — pavilions, halls, terraces, towers — rose from the bottom of the cliff while their beams and pillars were supported on rocks at higher levels. Other constructions were, so to speak, embedded in limestone caves so that I could hardly distinguish where nature stopped and human skill took over.

There are actually two main groups of caves on the cliff, but the area is known collectively as the Qinglong (Green Dragon) Caves in view of the legend that a green dragon was once seen in the vicinity. Construction work started here between 1372 and 1398 in the Ming dynasty (1364-1644). Then, under the Qing (1644-1911), seven groups of temples and pavilions — both Buddhist and Taoist — were built consecutively, covering an area of more than 21,000 square metres along the cliffside.

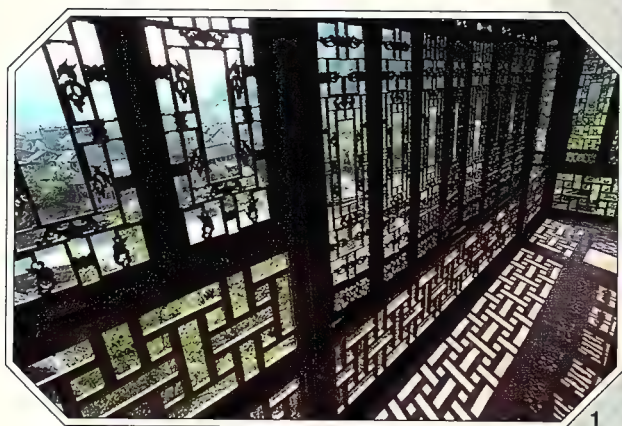
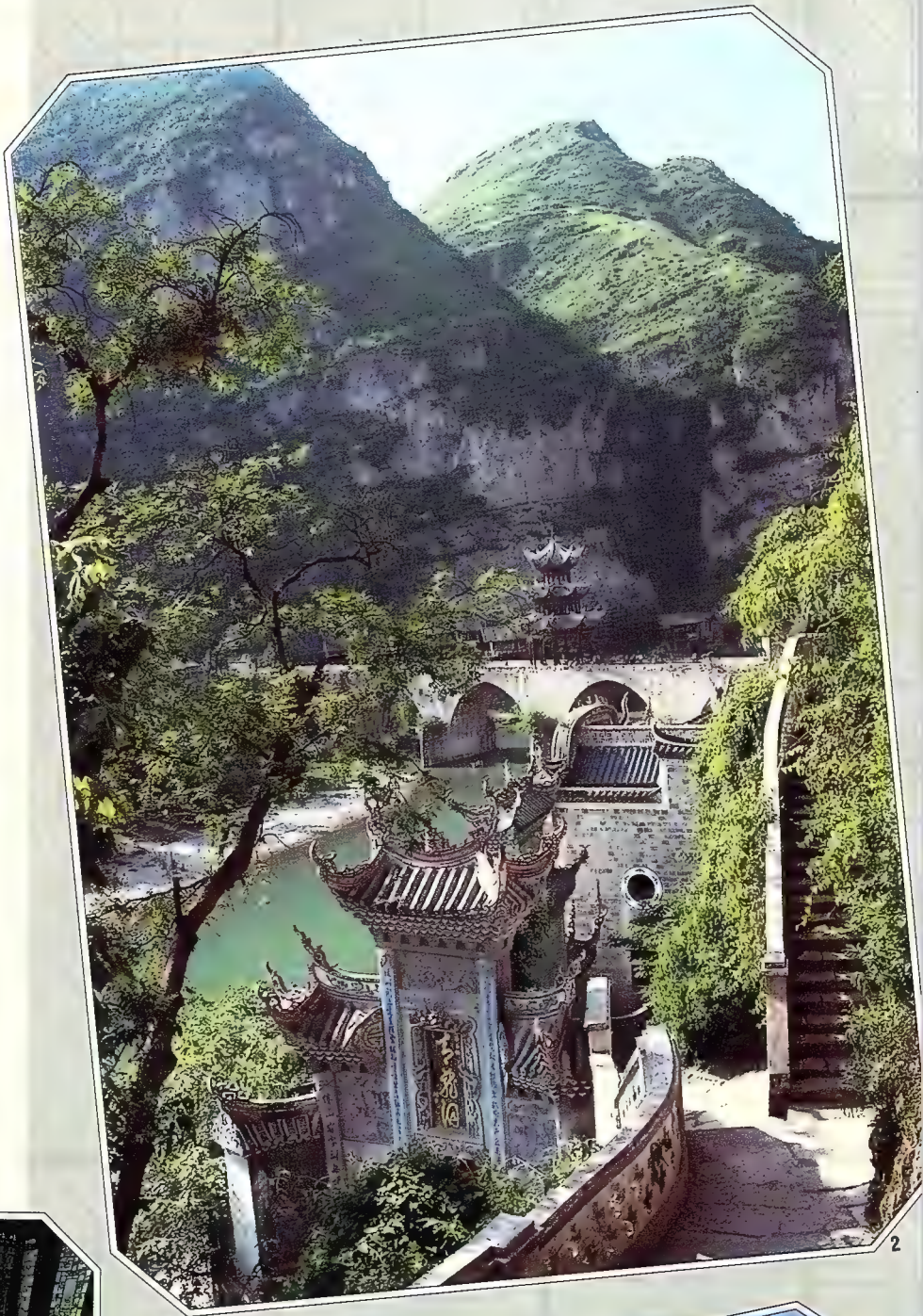
Making my way up the hill, I started with the Qinglong Temple itself, a Taoist sanctuary consisting of three halls. The highest, the Yuhuang (Jade Emperor) Hall, is only around three metres below the summit. The builders showed extraordinary skill and ingenuity in constructing the hall in such a way that half of it is in a cave, the rest suspended in mid-air. It looked so precarious that I was reminded at once of the Xuankong (Hanging) Monastery in the Hengshan Mountains in Shanxi Province. The Qinglong Temple was funded from donations collected by a Taoist priest named Li, and this complex became a famous site of pilgrimage for Taoist believers.

At the back of the temple is Wanshou (Longevity) Palace, which was constructed by rich merchants of Zhenyuan County in the name of an association of fellow townsmen during the nineteenth century. The buildings are arranged on graduated terraces laid out in a symmetrical fashion on an axis from north to south. I passed through the front entrance and saw before me a group of buildings in the Qing palatial style. In the centre was a great hall where the local dignitaries and noble lords

would gather to drink and watch opera performances; the two wings were reserved for their families and dependants. The central courtyard looked as though it was once used as a stage.

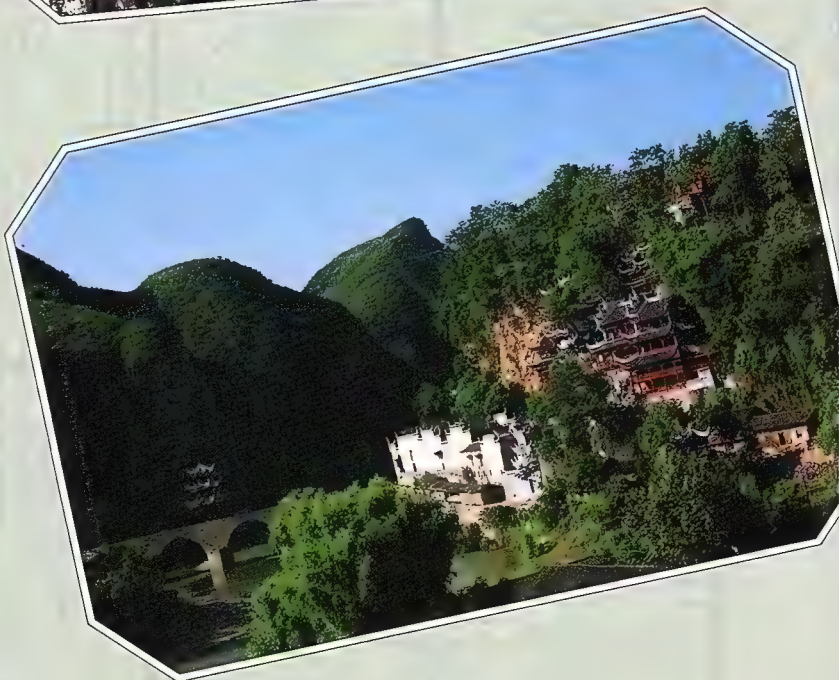
In such a place of entertainment patronized exclusively by the nobility, it is not surprising that all the architectural details are very fine. There are engravings and carvings on the caisson ceiling, doors and windows. The gateways, brackets, and boards inscribed with couplets are masterpieces of wood-carving. The horizontal plaques bearing characters in gold and red over the lintels and the wall hangings still attract many a visitor.

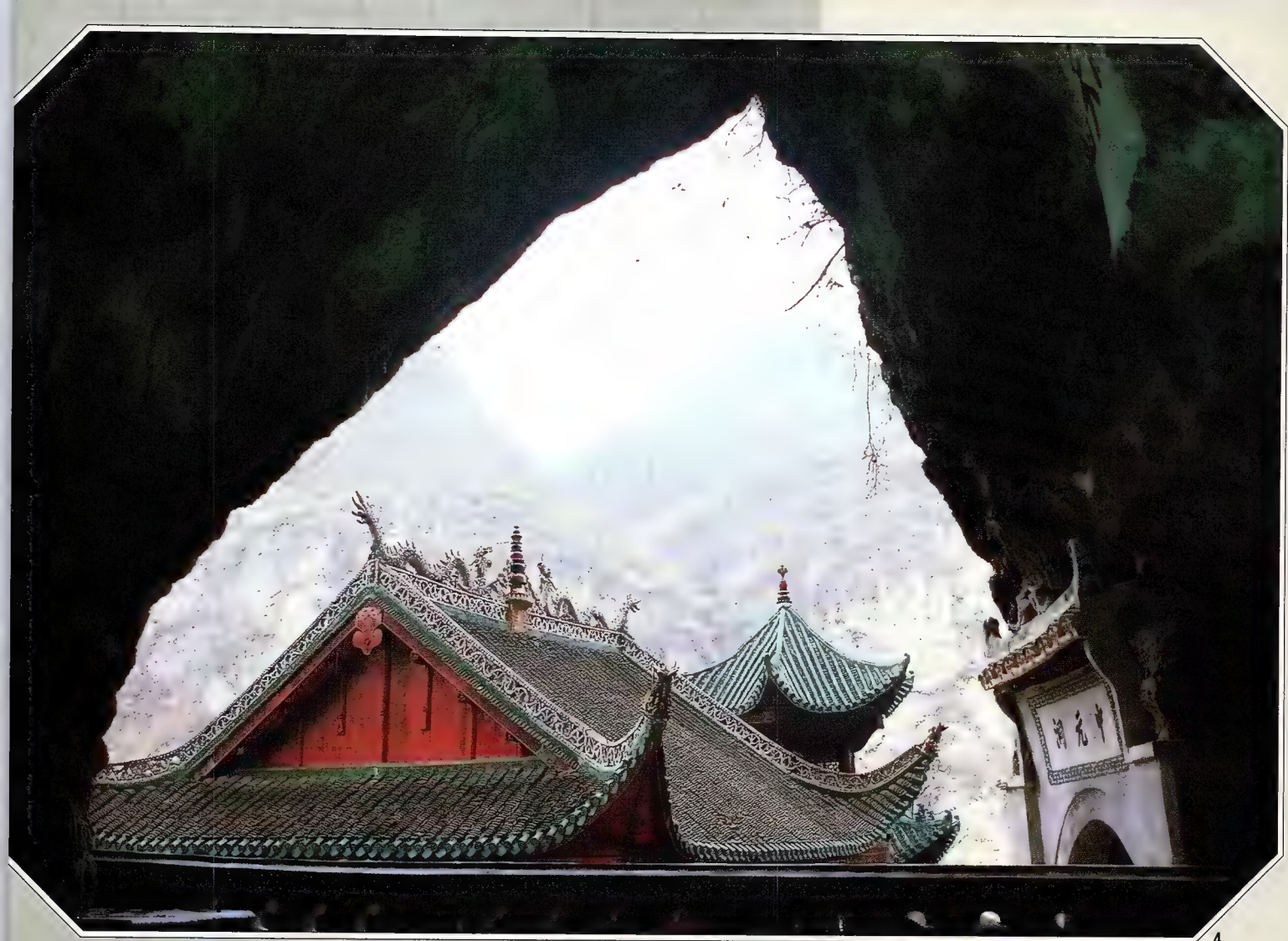
I continued the short distance to Zhongyuan Monastery. Inside, the main hall, the library of Buddhist scriptures, the Wangxing Tower and a hexagonal pavilion demonstrate the grandeur of Buddhist architecture. But there is also a unique and picturesque garden there. Most interesting of all is that even the monastery's main entrance is hidden inside the 850-square-metre cave. Who knows whether Buddhist mysticism played some part in dictating this layout? The sides of the cave are covered with numerous stalactites and there are openings off it to minor caves of uncertain depth. There are also natural petrifications in the shape of straw sandals and umbrellas said to have been left by Zhang Sanfeng (the famous Taoist priest who founded the Wudang



school of boxing at Mount Wudang in western Hubei during the Ming dynasty) when he came to live in the cave for a while.

Wandering around on Zhonghe Cliff, I followed rough tracks. My attention was frequently caught not only by the rugged features of the terrain, with its projections and caves, but also by the various buildings and





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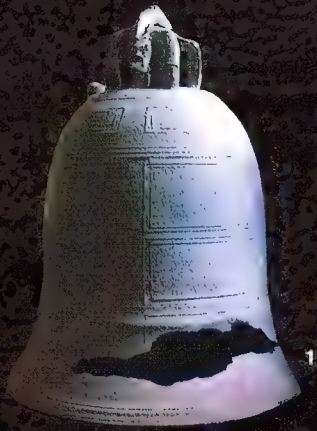
pavilions which I came across now and then. These are said to be the ruins of old Zhenyuan, once an important imperial outpost along the trading route connecting the Central Plains with the southwest and beyond to Southeast Asia.

Guizhou Province does not have too many ancient buildings to show. The ones more commonly known all date from the Ming dynasty: Jiaxiu Pavilion, Wenchang Temple and Yangming Temple. These are all located in Guiyang, the provincial capital. However, from what I saw, they cannot compare with the architectural complex at the Qinglong Caves, whether in size or in aesthetic appeal and importance. Thus, this site located on the border between Guizhou and Hunan represents a rare historical treasure for south-western China.



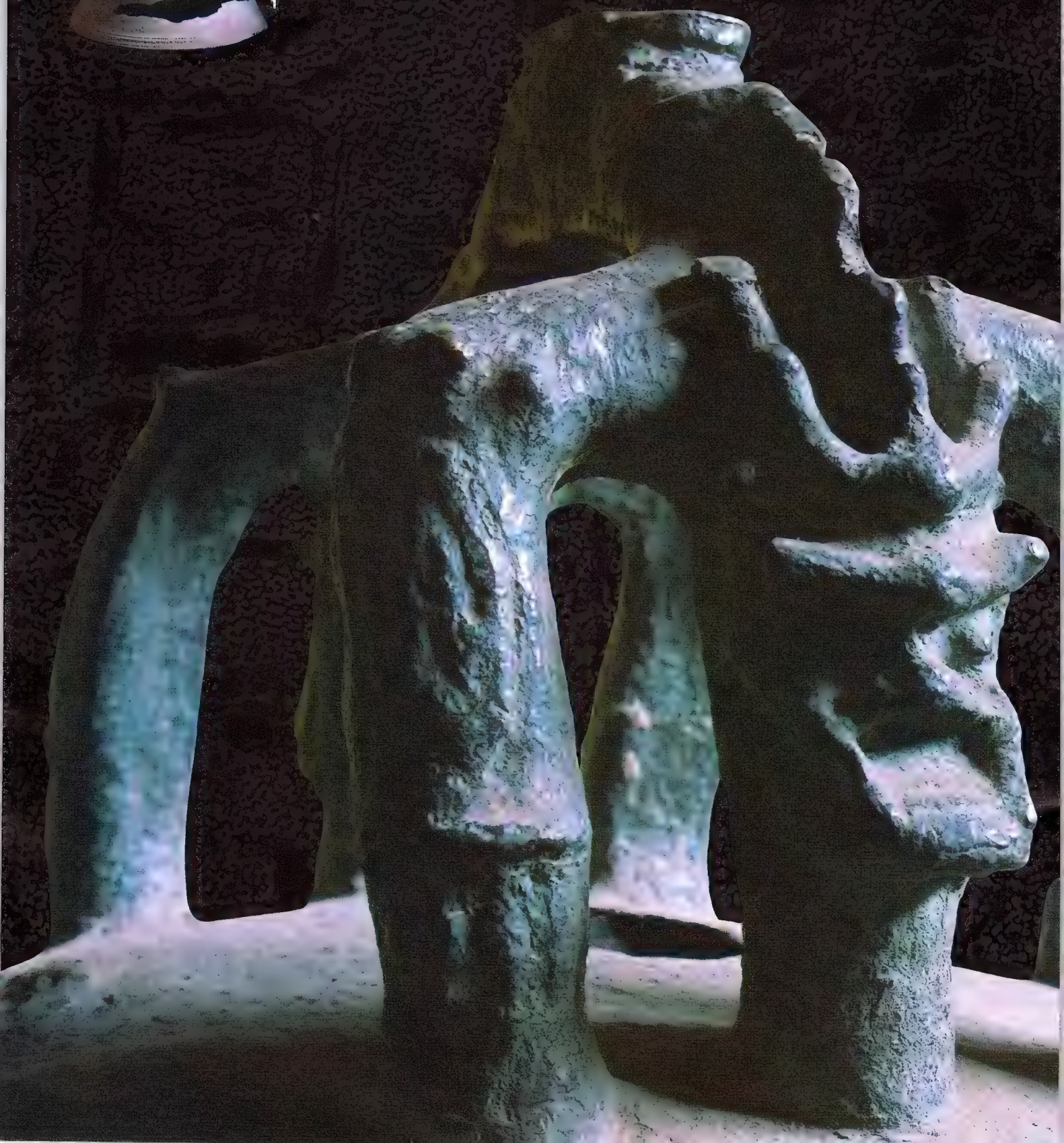
Translated by Annette Lee

Overlooking the River Wuyang (1 and 2, both by Wang Miao), the Qinglong Caves seem to spill down the cliff (3). Buildings both inside and outside natural caves (4). A detail of the Wanshou Palace stage (5) (3, 4 and 5 by He Huaibo).



The Bronze Bell of Chenghua

PHOTOS BY HE PEIQUN TEXT BY ZHONG DEHONG





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Dafang County in northwestern Guizhou Province is the home of the so-called Bell of Chenghua, cast about five hundred years ago. This bell — unusual for its inscriptions in Yi script — is one of very few historical relics found in Guizhou.

The story behind its origin takes us back to the mid-Ming dynasty and Emperor Xianzong, whose reign title was Chenghua. In 1485 the emperor named an official of the Yi people, An Guirong, as the general with responsibility for guarding the southwestern border. Since it was highly unusual at that time for a tribal figure to be given an imperial commission (although the Yis had been military men for many centuries, the independent Nanzhao Kingdom based in Dali, Yunnan, during the Tang dynasty (618-907) having been founded by Yi generals), An Guirong and his wife believed they had been especially blessed by the gods. They therefore decided to thank them by casting a bell for the Yongxing Temple in Dafang, employing a master coppersmith from Dali to do the job for them. The temple was later destroyed, but the bell survived and was eventually moved to what is now the Chengguan Primary School.

Cast from a tin and copper alloy, the bell is 1.35 metres high and 1.1 metres in diameter; it weighs around three hundred kilos. It is topped by a six-lugged mount. The two main lugs, one on either side, bear a horned ogre mask which seems to be influenced by the culture of the Huanghe (Yellow River) Valley.

The design on the body of the bell is of two types. The central section contains eight squares of inscriptions in both Yi and Chinese — a highly unusual occurrence. Although some of the inscriptions are now so worn they are barely legible, it is nevertheless clear that many of the Yis' religious beliefs at that time centred on witchcraft. The other decorations are 'cloud and thunder' patterns underlying inscriptions on four *bagua* (Eight Trigrams) with the Chinese characters for 'sun' and 'moon' scattered in between.

Despite the clever reinforcement of the lower part of the bell to enable it to withstand heavy use, repeated striking over the centuries has caused some damage to the metal fabric around the rim.



Translated by Tai Chi Yin

In relatively good condition after five hundred years (1), the bell bears inscriptions in both Yi and Chinese (3) and is surmounted by ogre masks (2).

Cheung Chau: Island Oasis

PHOTOS BY RAYMOND LAI
ARTICLE BY LAM KIN FAI





Cheung Chau's main cultural attraction, the Pak Tai Temple (1). Marine products include shell plant-holders (2) and the traditional salted fish and shrimp paste (3, by Daniel Ng).



With its big-city bustle, its massed offices and shops, its towering skyscrapers and its frequently cramped living conditions (six million people cluster on a land area of around 1,000 square kilometres, much of it mountainous), Hong Kong sometimes seems just too claustrophobic for one's peace of mind. And it is then that city-dwellers turn their attention to some at least of the over two hundred outlying islands. At weekends and public holidays the ferry services are stretched to their limit as young people and family groups head for greener and more open spaces.

Village Ambience

The most popular of the outlying islands, the one with the most general appeal, is undoubtedly Cheung Chau, which lies just seven kilometres southwest of Hong Kong Island. Meaning 'long island' in Cantonese, Cheung Chau was originally two separate islets. The action of the waves gradually deposited sand banks between the islets which eventually linked up to form the island we see today. There are hills to north and south on the former islets, while the central part is an isthmus only two hundred metres across at its narrowest. From the pier on one side it takes you less than ten minutes to get to the beach on the other. A walk around the entire island on concrete paths will only take around two hours.

Reputed to have been a haunt of pirates, Cheung Chau was a thriving fishing harbour in the Ming and Qing dynasties (1368-1911) and its fishing fleet and fishing community still play an important role today. The current population is around forty thousand — the largest of any of the outlying islands — on an area of only a few square kilometres. Nevertheless, the island still retains its air of peace and quiet once you are away from the pier area, since there are no vehicles except for the small battery-operated fire engines and the inescapable bicycles, available for hire, which are much favoured by day-trippers. Luckily, most of the streets in the flat, central section are too tortuous and narrow even for bicycles, so that you can stroll along without the need to look over your shoulder constantly or watch for oncoming traffic. This is another of the reasons for Cheung Chau's popularity.

The central isthmus contains the greatest concentration of shops, houses and lanes. Perhaps the most characteristic shops are the humble ones which sell salted fish and the dull-pink shrimp paste which is an essential element of local cooking. Other stalls sell maritime by-products, groceries, dry goods and rice — the traditional range of offerings. The whole place has a delightfully laid-back, 'village' atmosphere which quickly makes one forget the stressful rat-race of the city.

When you are tired of wandering, turn down any street leading west to return to the pier area or turn east for the long beach, much favoured by windsurfers. If you go north or south, you will inevitably reach a temple. To the south is the Tin Hau Temple; no fishing community along the South China Sea would be complete without one, since the popular goddess is the special protectress of all who go to sea. To the north is the hundred-year-old Yuxu or Pak Tai Temple, dedicated to the Lord of the North, the island's patron deity. This interesting temple, which also

Aspects of the Bun Festival: giant joss sticks (1),
Cantonese opera (2), effigies of the presiding
deities (3), part of the parade (5) (all by Chan
Yat Nin). A child in the piao se procession
illustrates Hong Kong's preoccupation with the
law (4, by Lam Kin Fai).





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features statues of Pak Tai's companion deities, 'Thousand-Mile Eyes' and 'Favourable Wind Ears', attracts a steady stream of visitors throughout the year. It is also the venue for the annual Taiping Qingjiao (Peaceful Taoist Sacrificial Ceremony), better known in English as the Bun Festival and Cheung Chau's main claim to fame.

The Bun Festival

This four-day festival, which falls in May most years on a date dependent on the lunar calendar, has a long but rather obscure history. It is believed to date back to the eighteenth century, when Cheung Chau was ravaged by a series of misfortunes including an outbreak of plague. In their distress, the islanders prayed for deliverance to Pak Tai and, as though by a miracle, their prayers were heard. They have honoured him ever since, abstaining from the consumption of meat and alcohol during the festival period. Butcher's shops close, only vegetarian food is available, and fishing boats stay in port. Other sources say that this festival is connected with expiating the sins of the dead, placating the 'wandering souls' on the island so that the living can live in peace.

Whatever its origins, this is the high point of the year for the islanders. The space in front of the Pak Tai Temple changes its aspect dramatically. A temporary altar is erected, with three immense paper effigies of the major deities and gigantic joss sticks. Nearby a bamboo shed is set up, sheltering a stage where Cantonese opera is performed day and night. Entrance to the performances is free, but you have to bring your own chairs (folding stools are favoured by elderly Cheung Chau residents), or sit on the ground.

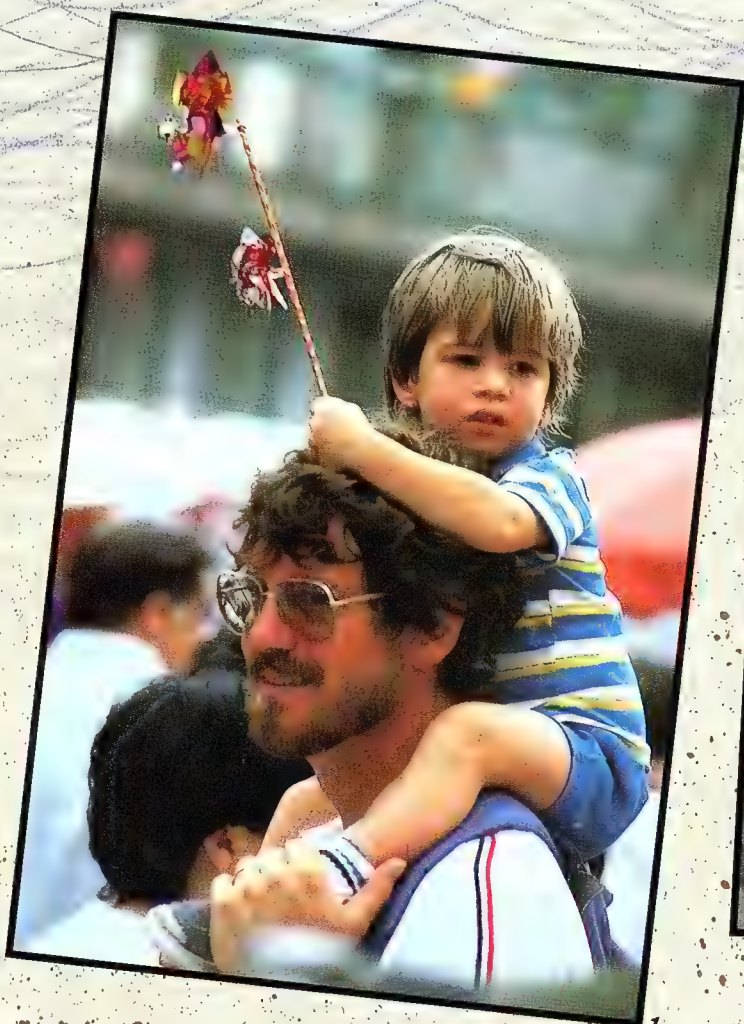
The English name for the festival is derived from the steamed buns which are strung together and mounted on giant frames, forming three twelve-metre-high 'bun towers' not far from the Pak Tai Temple. In the past, the young men of the island would clamber up the towers in a mad scramble at the appointed hour, believing that the first to the top would enjoy a particularly fortunate year. But accidents occurred and people were hurt when the towers collapsed, so that the buns are now distributed at the end of the festivities for general good luck.

The parade on the third day represents the climax of the festival. Various associations, neighbourhood committees and so on have their own teams of gymnasts who don costumes and perform dragon and lion dances to start the proceedings. The procession gets underway with floats, often portraying historical scenes, and stilt-walkers who thread their slow way through the narrow streets of the island backed by musicians with drums, gongs and other instruments. The local residents come out of their houses or throng their balconies to watch the parade pass. When, as frequently happens, there is a blockage further up the line, there is much banter between householders and performers until they can get going again.

For the thousands of tourists and sightseers who flock to the island on this occasion, especially the foreigners, one of the most fascinating and puzzling sights is the *piao se* (literally, 'floating colours') which seems to feature astonishingly gifted child acrobats. At the height of the parade



New housing provides better homes (2). Foreigners add a touch of diversity to the island's streets as residents (3, by Daniel Ng), admirers (4) and enthralled spectators (1, by Chan Yat Nin, and 5, by Lam Kin Fai).





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there will be a series of brilliantly clad children in view along the streets, some representing gods and goddesses, others illustrating some local hot topic. How is it possible for a tiny child to remain motionless high in the air for hour after hour, apparently balancing on a teacup? In fact, the children are held securely in a harness attached to a camouflaged support. The illusion is heightened by the use of false limbs, etc. The children are in no danger of falling, although the long, hot hours in heavy costume and make-up must be very wearisome and boring for them.

Greater Changes Evident

Cheung Chau attracts many visitors and tourists. Inevitably, all this interest has also brought about many changes in Cheung Chau itself. Every time you visit the island, you notice more and better new houses; besides serving the local people, these are frequently fitted out as holiday homes or flatlets for weekly, weekend or daily rental. There are also a few hotels on the island now, including the upmarket Hotel Warwick for those willing to pay more. In addition, many local people who had left the island to find more rewarding jobs in the city have found that they prefer to live and spend their leisure hours in the much more peaceful and relaxed ambience offered by the island. They willingly spend an hour each way on the ferry journey as long as they can escape the city at the end of the day.

Among the commuters are foreigners of many nationalities. In Hong Kong itself, the pace of life never seems to slacken, and they and their families have come to treasure the still rather old-world atmosphere associated with Cheung Chau, as well as the cleaner air, and the better leisure possibilities. These foreigners also seem to enjoy the chance to participate in local life at grassroots level. At festival times, you often see foreign children perched on their fathers' shoulders, traditional Chinese-style pinwheel in hand, squashed in among the rest of the crowd. Their expressions of enjoyment are no less enthusiastic than those of local children. Everybody loves a festival!

With the steady increase in population and the upsurge in tourism, commercial activities on the island are booming. As you arrive in Cheung Chau, colourful paper floral signs line the sides of the pier to announce the opening of new businesses, mainly shops. The original marketplace is starting to look quite ancient. Following the trend in the rest of Hong Kong, supermarkets controlled by big chains have taken the lead in the 'invasion' of Cheung Chau. Convenience stores open twenty-four hours a day have been quick to follow.

Restaurants and eating places are also doing well. As Cheung Chau is a fishing port there is no lack of good, fresh seafood, with the advantage of lower prices than in the city. *Daipaidong* (open-air food stalls) set up tables and chairs along the waterfront at dusk; first buy your prawns, crabs, garoupa or whatever from the seafood seller, then select a *daipaidong*, which will cook your purchases according to your wishes. There are other street-side open-air cafés and beer gardens too. The lack of cars and the less polluted air of Cheung Chau means that these are popular, and they tend to be a mixture between the local



Some customs persist — a street barber (1), a present of cakes from the groom's family to the bride before the wedding (2) — and fishing is still an important industry (5). A Japanese snack bar is another sign of changing times (4). Cheung Chau at night shines much brighter than any other outlying island (3), a reflection of its population density.





daipaidong and a European-style café, possibly influenced by the many foreign residents. Even Japanese snack bars, run by Japanese, have made an appearance.

The evenings on Cheung Chau are particularly pleasant, sitting over a coffee or a beer, sniffing the sea breezes and watching the comings and goings of the fishing boats through the busy harbour as the sun sets over neighbouring Lantau Island. Later, the silence is broken only by the barking of the dogs, the chirping of the cicadas and the put-put of motorized sampans across the bay.

All the changes evident on Cheung Chau are a reflection in miniature of those taking place in Hong Kong as a whole. Ancient and modern, traditional and cosmopolitan, East and West—all these aspects continue to mingle and exert their influence. Despite the innovations, many things on the island continue as before. Old-fashioned hand-painted film hoardings are changed every other day to promote a new release. Street-side barbers still ply their trade wherever they can find a space, and they still fulfil a need, despite the beauty salons offering the latest styles. Walking from one end of Cheung Chau to the other, you seem to span twenty years.

In the same way, although many people living on Cheung Chau are now just urban commuters who use the island as a pleasant escape from city life, there are still many residents with deep roots there. These people are careful not to omit any of the traditional details when celebrating festivals, weddings, and so on. At such times the differences between 'old Cheung Chau folks' and 'new immigrants' is very apparent.

Translated by Annette Lee



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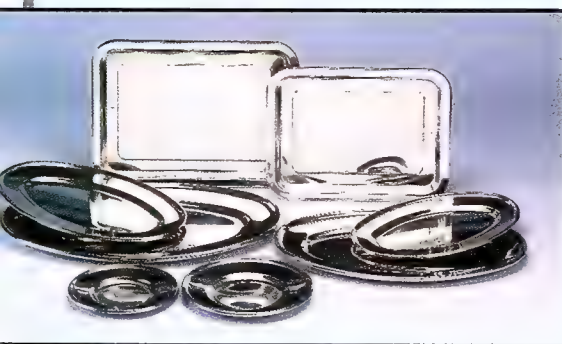
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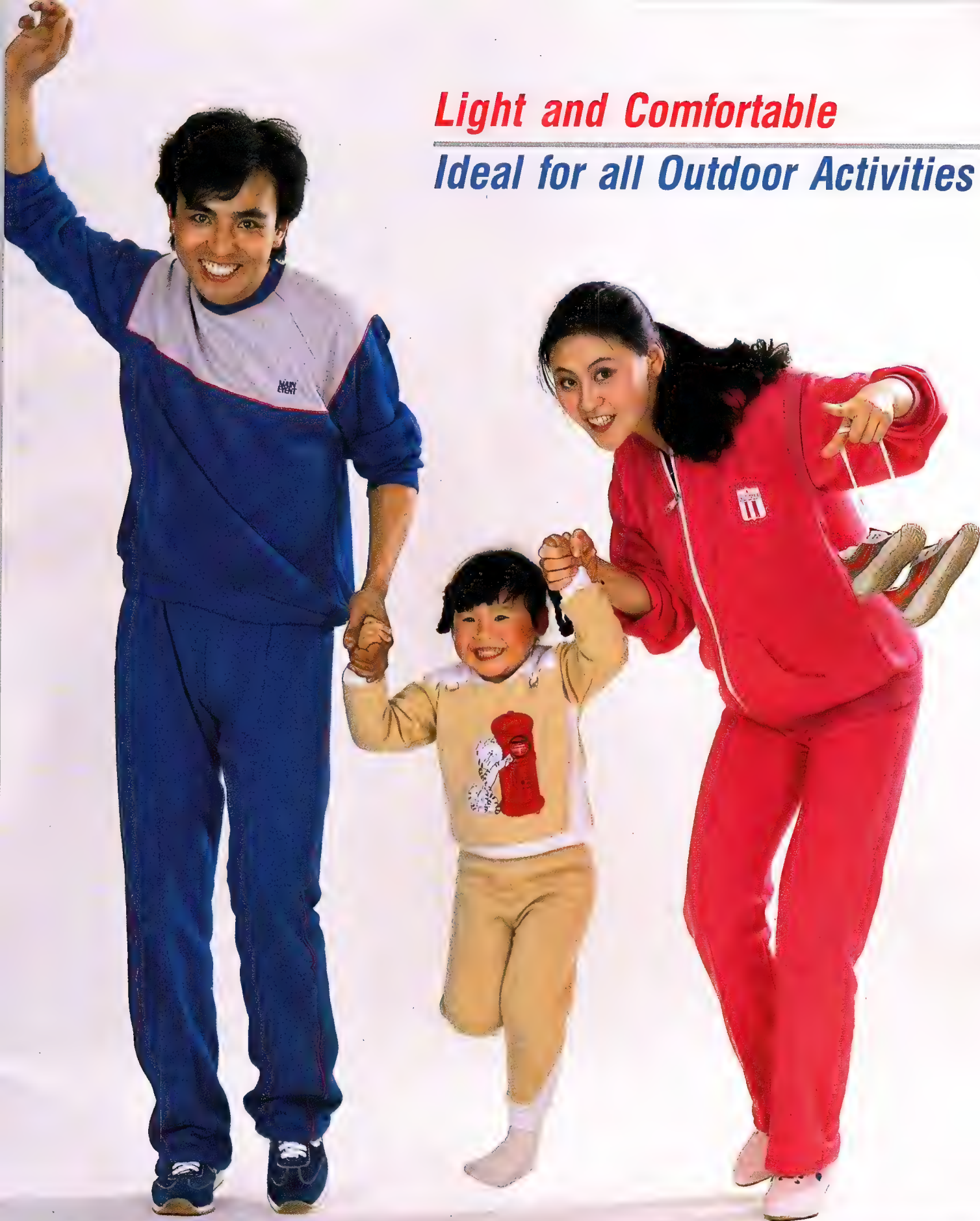
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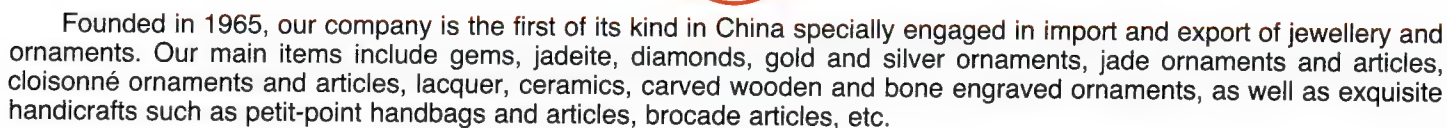
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Among the numerous varieties, "Dragon-fly" 4602A badminton shoes are specially developed for Chinese badminton players taking part in international tournaments. Made of the finest materials with elaborate workmanship, they are comfortable, springy and wear-resisting, they have become favourite footwear for athletes at home and abroad. The Chinese national badminton team has won several important international competitions including the Thomas Cup in 1982 and the Uber Cup in 1983. The success of the badminton team is to a large extent attributed to the "Dragon-fly" badminton shoes they wore.

"Dragon-fly" badminton shoes are now sold to Southeast Asia, Africa and Europe. They have established ready markets in these regions. We welcome businessmen from all over the world to do business with us. Please contact our office for details and orders.

北京市橡膠一廠從一九七一年開始生產蜻蜓牌球鞋，以產品式樣不斷更新、球鞋質量好而著稱。產品分模壓底和滾筒底兩類，並有羽毛球鞋、網球鞋、籃球鞋、排球鞋、田徑鞋等多種式樣。

例如蜻蜓牌4602 A 羽毛球鞋，由高明技師特為國家羽毛球運動員專門設計，經過幾十次試穿和改進方確定楦型，選料優良，造工精細，堅固耐用，彈性好，穿著舒適，適應各種動作，成為羽毛球運動專門體育用品，為國內外羽毛球愛好者所喜愛。中國羽毛球隊自參加國際比賽以來，曾多次奪魁，並於一九八二年、一九八四年、一九八六年分別奪得湯姆斯杯和尤伯杯，如此神功，亦與選用蜻蜓牌羽毛球鞋有密切關係。

蜻蜓牌羽毛球鞋，深受外國朋友喜愛，蜻蜓牌各種球鞋已經近銷東南亞國家，遠銷非洲、歐洲。目前爭購訂貨已是供不應求。今後將繼續努力，增加花色品種，適應國際市場的各種需求。



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PHOTOGRAPHER: CHEN JIE





山城 話舊

A typical scene south of the River Yangtse; girls and women snatch a quiet moment for a gossip among the old houses, simple yet elegant in black and white. The photographer has entitled this *Reminiscing About Old Villages*, a nostalgic title reproduced above in the archaic *lishu* (official script).

ADAPTED BY YAN WENBIAN,
ZHENG PENG & GU QING

A DAI LEGEND: THE

One of the many minority peoples of Yunnan Province, the Dai — scattered down the province's western borders abutting on Burma but concentrated in Xishuangbanna in the south — have an age-old culture and rich artistic traditions. Most of their myths, legends, folktales, poems and proverbs have been passed down on patra leaves and refined through the ages. Some contain a moral message, others are based on historical happenings, while many are witty, poking fun at feudal rulers.

Here is an excerpt from a romantic tale with a dashing hero with magic powers and a mysterious, beautiful heroine, which also incorporates that beloved Dai totem — the peacock. You can rest assured that there is a happy ending!

For a thousand miles the Lancang River flows to the south. Over the years it has brought down a hundred thousand grains of glittering gold and left a thousand and ten stories along its banks, among which is....

In Mengbanjia, a land of perennial green, there once lived a king named Bageladie. His granaries overflowed with the fruits of good harvests and his palace was beyond compare for splendour and richness, but he had no children. Both he and his queen Magianna longed for a son, for an heir to succeed to the throne and complete their happiness.

And then, one morning in early spring, their wish was fulfilled. The people rushed excitedly about, talking of a strange happening. A man-child crawled out from the foot of a huge white elephant and then disappeared without a trace. Right at this moment, the queen gave birth to a healthy son whom the king named Zhaoshutun, after a prince famous for his bravery, hoping that his son, too, would grow into a strong, brave man.

With each passing day Zhaoshutun grew taller and stronger. He diligently studied the arts of peace and war, becoming well versed in the arts and proficient with all weapons. His intelligence was astonishing and his strength excelled all other men. One day he peered into a well and by the dim light beheld a strange object in it. The wise old men said that the great King Bamo had left a wonderful treasure there, which men for many generations had tried in vain to obtain. Zhaoshutun ordered the well be drained and when this was done he descended into the well to examine it more closely. The object was a magic bow. So powerful was it that he who owned it could defeat an entire enemy army. No one but Zhaoshutun had the strength to bend the huge bow; he could draw it taut till it was as round as the full moon, and every arrow from it hit the target clean and sure. One day as an evil bird of prodigious size was arrogantly wheeling overhead in the clouds, a black fish

clashed in its beak, an arrow from Zhaoshutun's bow pierced it. The fish fell from its beak into a river, and the bird, mortally wounded, plunged down into the forests below.

Sixteen times the breezes of autumn fanned the paddy fields into swaying, burning gold. Zhaoshutun was now a brave, handsome lad, with deep, clear eyes that sparkled with life. His face was more lovely than the legendary Dewawo's and his voice was like the chiming of bells, soft and musical to the ear. When the maidens saw him their mouths and eyes opened wide in admiration and they longed to toss the embroidered pouch of courtship at him, offer him the slit-bamboo stool reserved for their dear ones, and give him love nuts. His parents grew increasingly concerned about his marriage, and time and again urged him to marry a girl of noble birth. The treacherous minister Mahaxiena, eager to increase his influence over the throne, offered his daughter. But it was of no use. Of the many beautiful but emptyheaded daughters of nobles, not one could win Zhaoshutun's heart. His one wish was to find himself a girl as capable as she was beautiful, who would be his faithful companion for life.

One day, with his magic bow and sword, and mounted on his wonder horse, Zhaoshutun rode away, over vast fields, over range after range of mountains and through thick forests, to search for a girl after his heart. On the way he fell in with an old hunter named Gehagan and the two became firm friends. Together they hunted the wild boar and the deer, and shared the same fire. As they ate their fill of savoury venison they talked of many interesting things. One of the stories Gehagan told the prince was this:

Not many years ago, Bana, the god of the waters, with a magic weapon captured the son of Bahun, king of all fish-eating birds. In revenge the bird king caught the god of waters while he was visiting the ocean's surface in the guise of a black fish. And just as the bird king was exulting high in the skies an arrow suddenly struck him, making him release the black fish, which fell down into a river, right into the net old Gehagan had spread. The black fish pleaded to be set free and promised to come to Gehagan's aid whenever he needed help. The kind-hearted Gehagan set the fish free.

"I admired the Bowman whose arrow brought down that fish! I have always hoped that some day I will meet him," concluded Gehagan.

"That unknown Bowman probably wants to meet you even more," Zhaoshutun added with a smile. So they talked through the night, like old, intimate friends. Zhaoshutun looked up and sighed.

"Ah, bright star!" he said. "Herald of dawn! So high, yet so easily seen. Now why is a beautiful and talented maid born among men so difficult to find?"

"Love never disappoints pure hearts. The steadfast and true will bring the deep-seated spring water to the surface," Gehagan chuckled knowingly. Zhaoshutun nodded. He would remember that saying. "And not far from here," the old hunter went on, "is Lake Langsina with its jade-green waters as clear as a polished mirror. And every seven days, seven peacock maidens extraordinarily fair to see bathe there. They are as fair as flowers, and the youngest outshines them all. When you see her, you will see the beauty of the legendary Nandiuwala and you will know what wisdom and cleverness really mean. Come, let us go and see...."

Zhaoshutun rose eagerly. They mounted their swift horses and soon were at the lake. They hid themselves on the lake's edge and waited.

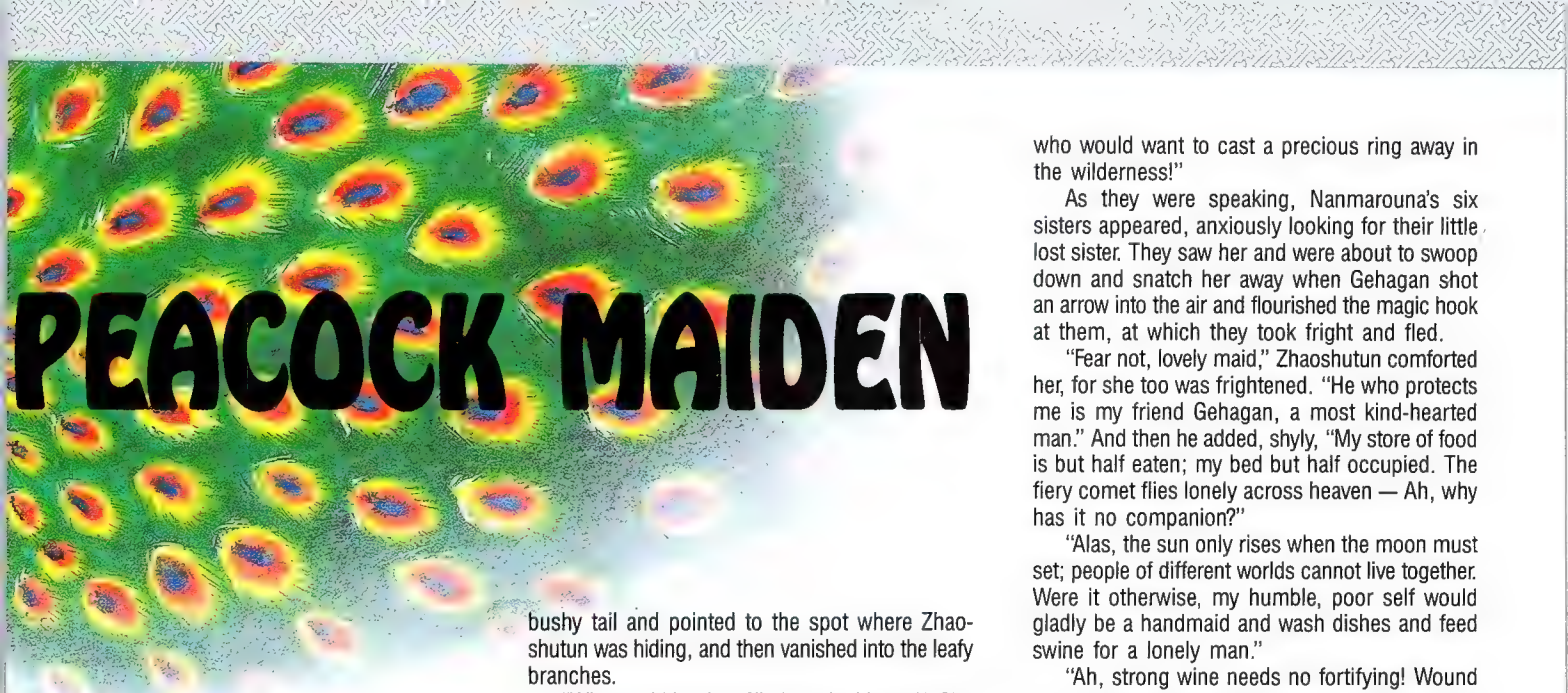
The weather at noon was warm and mild, and the limpid waters of the lake mirrored the many-coloured clouds which sailed gently across the sky, fanned by a soft, fragrant breeze. Suddenly, from out of the skies seven colourful peacocks flew down and alighted on the shore. Quickly the peacock cloaks were shed, and seven graceful maidens appeared, who, laughing merrily, plunged into the lake. Zhaoshutun and Gehagan gazed, fascinated. After a while the peacock maidens rose from the water and, donning their peacock cloaks, began to dance. Zhaoshutun was enchanted by the youngest, the seventh sister, Nanmarouna. Oh, how she danced! But all too soon the dancers turned back into peacocks, rose high into the air and flew away towards the west, and became seven tiny specks on the horizon, with Zhaoshutun gazing longingly after them.

"Don't be so sad!" said Gehagan. "They'll come back again in another seven days."

"Seven days! And then only for a few moments! How can I stop them leaving?"

"Let us go and ask the hermit Palaxi. He might know."

They went and found Palaxi in his forest home. Smilingly he looked Zhaoshutun over. He shook his head at first, but finally gave a nod, and summoning an otter, told Zhaoshutun to follow it. The otter led them to the side of Lake Langsina,



PEACOCK MAIDEN

where it plunged in. The waters immediately divided into two, leaving a wide, dry path. Along this came Bana, the god of waters himself, who greeted Zhaoshutun as his saviour, and led them into his magnificent palace. Only then did Gehagan realize that the Bowman who had shot down the evil bird Bahun was no other than his companion. After revealing all the secrets of a magic hook he had, the god of waters lent it to Zhaoshutun and escorted them back to the shore. The two friends resumed their hiding place and waited.

The longed-for day arrived. The sun hung in mid-heaven and Zhaoshutun and Gehagan saw on the horizon a flash as of seven glittering diamonds, which came straight towards them. As they drew nearer, the dazzling orbs of light became seven peacocks, and after alighting, they again became seven beautiful maidens, who dived into the lake. Zhaoshutun's eyes carefully sought out and marked the youngest maiden. He had watched where she hung her peacock cloak and then, while the maidens splashed and frolicked in the lake, he quietly took out his magic hook, brought down the maiden's clothing and gently took it to his hiding place.

The maidens finished their bathing. They were in panic when they discovered that seventh sister's clothing was not to be found! Nanmarouna began to cry, and her sisters comforted her, saying, "We will carry you home between us." Zhaoshutun was frightened when he heard this, and called out, "No! Don't go!" He was going to say "Here is your clothing!" but Gehagan clapped his hand over his mouth. The peacock maidens were startled when they heard a man's voice, and took to their wings, leaving Nanmarouna behind. She quickly darted into some thick bushes and hid herself.

After a long while when everything remained silent and motionless, she came out cautiously and began to look for her peacock clothing.

"Tee-hee-hee! Tee-hee-hee!" something chattered high in the trees. It was only an impertinent squirrel.

"O squirrel, have you seen my clothes?"

"Tee-hee-hee! Tee-hee-hee!" The squirrel only laughed.

"Oh, don't laugh! Can't you see I am looking frantically for my peacock cloak? I'm sure you know where it is! Won't you tell me?"

The squirrel, whiskers twitching, waved his

bushy tail and pointed to the spot where Zhaoshutun was hiding, and then vanished into the leafy branches.

"Who could be there?" she asked herself. She looked up. There was a falcon wheeling overhead. Could it be a bird who took my cloak? Swish! Zhaoshutun let fly an arrow and the falcon hurtled down, with an arrow through its heart. It dropped to the ground beside Nanmarouna. She picked it up and looked about her, astonished. Still she could see no one.

"O maiden," a voice called softly, "did the arrow fly true?"

Nanmarouna turned and saw Zhaoshutun, but it was too late to run and hide. It seemed a long, long while before she could find her voice. "Yes, right through the heart," she answered, in her soft, musical voice.

The two of them gazed at one another, speechless with enchantment. Then Nanmarouna spoke again, her face red with a rosy blush.

"My I ask if my elder brother has seen my peacock cloak?"

"Oh why, O maiden, are you not at home, but here in this wilderness, looking for a peacock cloak?"

"My six sisters and I came to swim in Lake Langsina . . . I hung my cloak on that flowering bough, but it has vanished."

"I can see no houses near or far. Can you be the fairy Nandiuwala from heaven, beautiful maid?"

"King Zhaodigasali of Mengwodongban is my father. I am Nanmarouna, his seventh daughter. You, elder brother, must surely be the handsome Bamo or Bana, the god of waters. The mortal world cannot have so handsome a youth."

"No. I am Zhaoshutun, son of King Bageladie of Mengbanjia. Though a thousand miles away, I sensed the fragrance of the flowers blossoming here, and came. Do not tell me the fresh flower before me belongs to another."

"My elder brother is so eloquent; he is a lovebird reciting his moving lines before me! There is no divine lotus here with a thousand petals, nor a flower so sweet that its perfume can spread even a hundred miles. The flower here showed little promise as a bud, and the poor blossom which resulted can only droop in shame. No one has ever come to water it, or caress it. Why should anyone stoop to pluck it?"

"A precious stone needs the cunning hand of a craftsman. O maiden, why are you not wearing the ring of some loved one?"

"What, I, a mere pebble in the wilderness! Who would deceive himself into thinking it a jewel! Or

who would want to cast a precious ring away in the wilderness!"

As they were speaking, Nanmarouna's six sisters appeared, anxiously looking for their little lost sister. They saw her and were about to swoop down and snatch her away when Gehagan shot an arrow into the air and flourished the magic hook at them, at which they took fright and fled.

"Fear not, lovely maid," Zhaoshutun comforted her, for she too was frightened. "He who protects me is my friend Gehagan, a most kind-hearted man." And then he added, shyly, "My store of food is but half eaten; my bed but half occupied. The fiery comet flies lonely across heaven — Ah, why has it no companion?"

"Alas, the sun only rises when the moon must set; people of different worlds cannot live together. Were it otherwise, my humble, poor self would gladly be a handmaid and wash dishes and feed swine for a lonely man."

"Ah, strong wine needs no fortifying! Wound not my heart further!" Zhaoshutun thought he could see a gleam of hope and went on more boldly. "I have journeyed a thousand miles across land and water to come here, and waited seven long nights and days to see you. I beg you to accompany me back to my home, to live with me."

"Water flows out from a jar easily but to scoop it back is hard," she answered. In truth, she had already lost her heart to this handsome youth, but she was not to be won too easily. "To go with you to your home would be enchanting, but what of your parents, the king and queen? What of your court and your people? They may not be pleased. And then how will I lift my head to eat my food? My eyes will never be dry."

"It cannot be that they will not be pleased! My parents love me well and will equally love what is mine. Your beauty equals that of Nandiuwala and will shine throughout the land. All my people will be proud and happy to see you as the prince's consort."

"But my parents! They will miss me and will be sad."

"My home be yours," said Zhaoshutun, taking a golden ring off his finger eagerly. "Oh, lovely maid! Accept this and gladden my heart!" He slipped it on her unresisting finger, and she gave him a jewel from her breast, saying, "In this you can always see your loved one."

No sooner had the two plighted their troth than two lotus blooms flowering on a single stem rose to the surface of the lake. The lovers thanked the hunter Gehagan and after leaving Zhaoshutun's wonder horse in his care as a parting gift, asked him to return the magic hook to its owner.

"And is it not time you returned my peacock cloak?" asked Nanmarouna, her eyes full of laughter.

He pulled her cloak out of the bushes and gave it back to her. She put it on and, holding Zhaoshutun's hand tightly, spread out her dazzling wings. They rose into the air and in a flash went to his home in Mengbanjia.

The romantic way in which their young prince had found his love set everyone buzzing with excitement. All agreed it was enchanting for their prince to have such a consort, as lovely as a fairy. All, that is, save that treacherous minister Mahaxiena. He was furious because his daughter had been rejected, and was determined to have his revenge. He openly opposed the marriage and tried to convince the king that Nanmarouna was a witch;

meanwhile he secretly sent messengers to the king of the neighbouring country of Mengshugang-Nagama, extolling the virtues and beauty of Nanmarouna and exhorting him to send his army to abduct her for himself, promising to do all he could to help such an invading army.

At first King Bageladie was reluctant to accept an unknown maiden as his son's bride, but he finally gave his consent when he saw how greatly his son loved Nanmarouna. The queen and Nanmarouna, however, liked each other from their first meeting and were soon fast friends. So, since nearly every noble approved, an auspicious day was chosen and preparations were started to celebrate the marriage.

Now the king of the neighbouring country of Mengshugang-Nagama was a wicked tyrant, and a sensual, greedy bully. When he received the traitor Mahaxiena's glowing report of Nanmarouna, he immediately assembled his army and invaded Mengbanjia.

It was on the very night of the wedding that the despatch from the frontier came, informing the king that the country had been invaded. Everything was thrown into confusion. Zhaoshutun consulted his wise Nanmarouna and decided that he would beg the king to let him lead the army against the invaders.

The king agreed, and Zhaoshutun and the army departed. Soon after he had gone, the traitor minister brought a false report about the fighting, asserting that the prince's army was being driven back and that defeat seemed certain. King Bageladie was numb with despair. Like a vanquished quail, he was deaf and blind to everything.

At night he had a terrible dream, so terrible that he could not forget it. He woke up shuddering and summoned all his lords and asked them to interpret this hideous nightmare. When he described it, the head priest, who was in league with the faithless minister, immediately interpreted it as the work of a witch who would betray the city.

"A witch! Where?" asked the king helplessly.

"Within the palace walls. But your humble servant dare not say more."

"In a time like this you must speak out and fear nothing," the king ordered.

Three times the head priest begged the king's pardon, as if he were reluctant to speak for fear of offending the king. Finally he spoke.

"It is no other than Nanmarouna," he said. "It is the prince's consort who has brought disaster upon us. If we do not rid ourselves of her, I fear for the consequences."

The king was greatly alarmed and did not know what to do. Mahaxiena was pleased to see the king's consternation and seized the opportunity to

pour more poison into his ears about Nanmarouna.

"Within seven days comes the Day of Sacrifice. Let Nanmarouna be seized and stripped of all her possessions and be executed on that day!" he proclaimed on behalf of the witless king.

The queen broke the dreadful news to Nanmarouna and hid the peacock cloak, hoping to find some way for her to escape. Poor Nanmarouna pleaded with the king, but he was adamant.

"Die bravely for the sake of our country and my son!" was his reply.

Nanmarouna was heart-broken. She wept and wept, longing for Zhaoshutun to come back and save her from this awful fate.

Zhaoshutun had driven the enemy back, and was even now leading his army triumphantly home, but he was still far away when the Day of Sacrifice came.

Nanmarouna was taken to the execution ground, her rich robes in tatters. She had already a plan for escape, but, at the thought of having to leave Zhaoshutun, she wept profusely. As she was led past the king and queen, she turned and begged them to listen to her last plea.

"Hear me, O King and Queen," she cried. "Let me once more put on my peacock cloak and dance for you before we part for ever!"

King Bageladie's heart softened and he granted her this last wish. The queen brought her the peacock cloak, the guards loosened her bonds, and Nanmarouna put it on.

Slowly she began her dance. She was lovely to watch, the colours on the cloak flashing as she swayed. Even the stony-hearted executioner stood entranced as though his soul was cleansed and purified by the young maid's dance, and the crowds forgot they were there to watch an execution and only knew they were watching a lovely dancer. Slowly Nanmarouna transformed herself into a peacock and rose into the air. The faithless minister shouted to the king to order the executioner to seize her, but it was already too late. She was out of reach, and soon out of sight.

"See, my lords," he shouted again in a fury. "See! She was a witch. She flew away!"

He had barely finished speaking when a warrior galloped up and ran to the king. He had brought the news of the victory. The king was still in a daze and asked again and again what news he brought.

"The prince, your son, leading Your Majesty's army, has routed the enemy. Our banners fly victoriously!" the soldier repeated.

The king looked at the treacherous minister, who bowed his head. Everything was now clear to him. The next minute the whole populace rose and with joyous shouts welcomed their victorious army returning, with Zhaoshutun at their head. The court musician sang a song of welcome:

Sweet is the juice of the coconut!

Strong the shell that guards it!

We people of Mengbanjia live happily,

With Zhaoshutun the Hero as our protector.

"The honour belongs to the beautiful Nanmarouna," said Zhaoshutun smilingly. "It was her strategy that defeated the enemy. Come, let us ask her to accept the honour."

The king turned pale. How could he have been so foolish and done such wrong to an innocent person! How more than foolish to mistake the bad for the good!

The head priest and the minister, fearful of Zhaoshutun's vengeance, hunched their shoulders and stole away as best they could, while the people and the soldiers bowed their heads and wept as they thought of Nanmarouna, their princess who was as lovely as the fairy Nandiuwala.

Prince Zhaoshutun was startled at the hush which fell after he had spoken.

"What is this?" he cried, alarmed. "What is this? What has happened?"

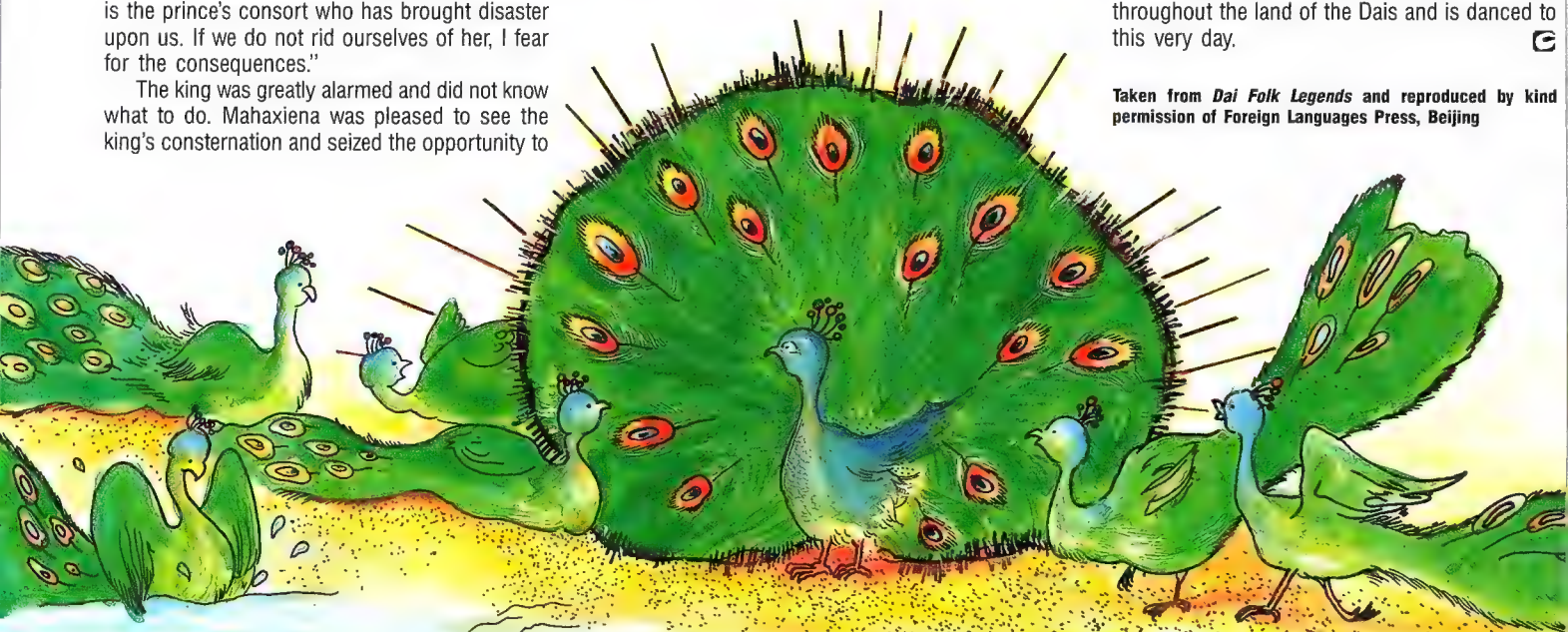
The king and queen, their hearts heavy with grief, forced themselves to tell the truth. The blow fell like a thunder bolt from a clear sky, or the hiss of water on red embers. Zhaoshutun staggered and dropped to the ground.

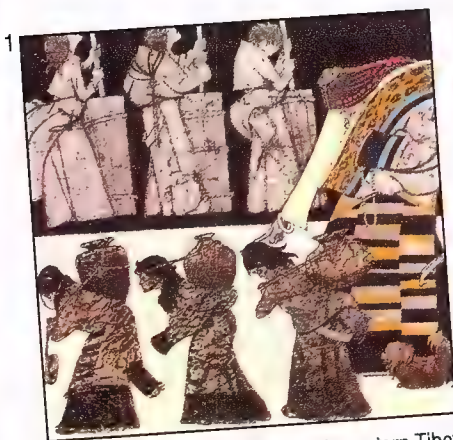
Only half-conscious, he murmured her name repeatedly. He took out the jewel she had given him at their betrothal, and looked into it. Yes, as she said, he could see her in it, with the hermit Palaxi, her cheeks wet with tears. It was like a physical pain in his heart and he fell back again in a swoon.

When he came to he was cold with anger. First, though, he was determined to find her again. Heedless of all pleas, he mounted his fiery steed and galloped to Lake Langsina, stopping neither day nor night. On and on, he spurred his horse, searching for his beloved Nanmarouna....

Nanmarouna's peacock dance, eventually a symbol of peace and happiness, became famous throughout the land of the Dais and is danced to this very day.

Taken from *Dai Folk Legends* and reproduced by kind permission of Foreign Languages Press, Beijing





Once upon a time, somewhere in eastern Tibet (now Qinghai), there lived a rich family with many slaves. The evil mistress of the household was reputed to be protected by demons.

A Tibetan Folk Story: Flowers on the Grassland

DRAWINGS BY HAN SHULI
TEXT BY LIU QIAN

Reproduced from *Flowers on the Grassland (Bangjinmeiduo)*,
published by the People's Fine Art Publishing House, Beijing



Nam, one of the slave girls, was always ready to lend a helping hand to those who were sick, old or too weak to perform all their many tasks.



One cold winter's night the mistress dreamed of a treasure trove guarded by warriors in golden armour. The treasure could only be exchanged for five special things.



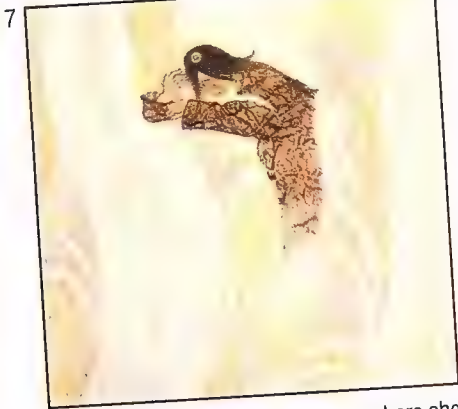
Next day, she ordered five of her slave girls to search for these five things. Protesting, they were forced to go out into the snowy wastes where the baying of wolves could be heard. Nam's pleas on their behalf went unheeded.



When none of them returned, kind-hearted Nam volunteered to go and look for them. She was straying through the dark and bitter blizzard, not knowing where to go, when faintly she heard a girl's voice calling her.



Searching in that direction, Nam found a bloodstained jacket left by the wolves and nearby the first of the five things, wild cabbage, into which her friend had been transformed at the moment of death.



Another girl's voice drew her on to where she found *qingke* (highland barley) growing, the second of the five things.

10



... and the fifth into a rare butterfly. Now Nam had found where her five friends had died and in so doing had collected the five special things which her mistress so urgently desired.



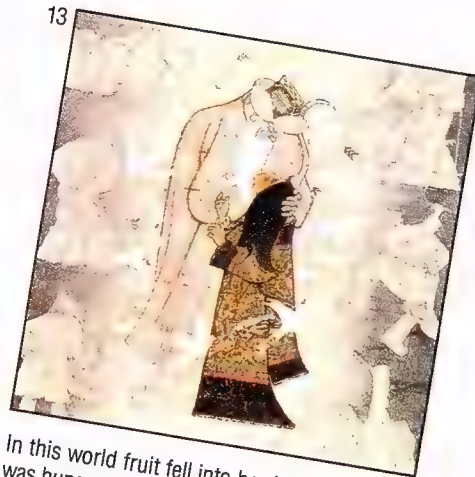
But Nam was reluctant to deliver these up to the evil woman. As she was crying, sad and despairing, an old, old man appeared and declared that he could help her shake off the chains of her life and attain freedom. Throwing a mani stone into the air, he told her to follow it.

12



Nam struggled across the rough terrain after the stone. When, inevitably, she stumbled and fell, the stone was transformed into a white horse which bore her swiftly across snowy mountains and icy rivers to a majestic palace inside which Nam found a world of lovely, bright landscapes and multifarious animal and plant life.

13



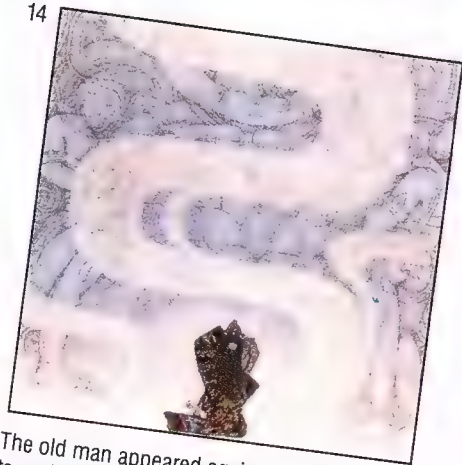
In this world fruit fell into her hand when she was hungry or thirsty, birds gave her garments of feathers to replace her own tattered robes, there was clear water to wash her face and precious stones to adorn her. Yet Nam could not be happy as long as her family and so many others were suffering under the yoke of tyranny.



The fourth had metamorphosed into beautiful wild flowers....



14



The old man appeared again and advised her to seek the help of White Tara. The benevolent Goddess of Mercy asked Nam what she would be prepared to give up in return for fulfillment of her wishes. Nam answered: 'My life.' Moved, the goddess gave her permission to lead the poor and oppressed to the holy land.

17



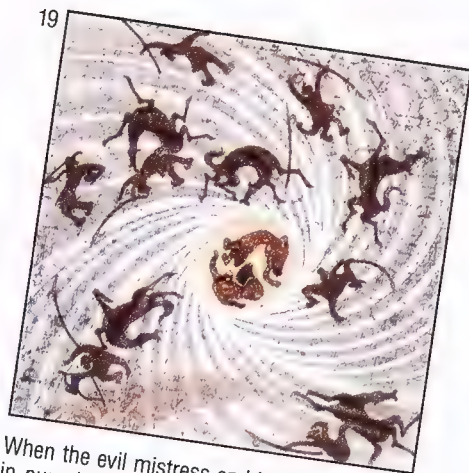
At the very moment when Nam and her friends were on the verge of falling, she prayed to Tara, reminding her that she would gladly sacrifice her life for the rest.

18



Instantly thunder and lightning annihilated the demons. The white horse appeared and carried Nam off into the sky, while the ex-slaves continued unscathed on their way to the holy land. Flowers sprang up as they passed.

19



When the evil mistress and her minions, still in pursuit, reached the flower-strewn paths, they were swallowed up and consigned to oblivion.

15



Birds helped spread the glad tidings, and the white horse took Nam back to her family. Amid general rejoicing, Nam kindled a great torch and everybody set out after her.

16



However, the evil mistress heard about it and summoned demons to recapture her slaves. A fight developed, fierce and furious; the demons used their black arts to open up a deep crevasse.



20



Ever since that time, the flowers which bloom all over the grasslands are said to be manifestations of Nam the Good.

Translated by M.K.



遠東傢具

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HANGZHOU



Up and Down China's 'Main Street'



I really didn't have much choice. The cheapest and most pleasant way of returning to Hong Kong from Chengdu in Sichuan was by travelling down what the Chinese call their 'main street' — the Changjiang or River Yangtse. Chongqing to Wuhan, and then just a relatively short train journey to Hong Kong, my home.

In Chengdu, the Jinjiang Hotel's booking office for the famous boat cruises down the Yangtse essentially catered for the more affluent tourists who preferred the offer of an easy and comfortable view of the Three Gorges from the second-class

cabins (there being no first class). For me, the opportunity to spend the next two or three days ensconced between well-endowed Americans was not tempting and so the only alternative which remained open was to travel to Chongqing by train and pick up a ticket there for a cheaper boat class. In this way there was also more hope of having the opportunity to meet a greater variety of Chinese people.

From Chengdu, a day-long train trip which traced the Minjiang, a tributary of the Yangtse, brought me safely at night into the hands of the hordes of mini-bus

operators at the bustling Chongqing train station. They swept me down into the centre of the city, and thankfully dropped me at the doors of a hotel with rooms to spare. After settling into the dormitory, I wandered around the main street searching for a place to eat which was open this late at night. I was amazed to find that this part of Chongqing resembled Hong Kong market nightlife, complete with brightly lit stalls and bustling roadside restaurants. I felt at home.

The next morning, down at the wharf I managed to buy a ticket for the earliest boat for Fengjie — an ancient town which stands just above the western entrance to Qutang, the first of the three great gorges. I slept that night on board and the next morning watched the boat gradually fill up with hundreds of people. By departure time, all the cabins were occupied and the corridors were filled with bodies huddled tightly together surrounded by their supplies and bedding for the three-day trip to Wuhan.

I was sharing a cabin with seven other people with whom I spent the day mostly occupied in playing Chinese card games on the open upper deck while watching the thick mist gradually lift from the hillsides, revealing green slopes of tangerine and peanut plantations interspersed with forests. Although small farming households were seen dotted here and there, it seemed quiet and mysterious along the river bank compared with our packed, heavy and noisy boat which ploughed its way along this mighty river. Occasionally we passed other passenger boats travelling upstream or smaller boats carrying coal or logs.

Life along major river systems always holds considerable interest for me. Many of the major developments in ancient civilizations have taken place along river banks and the Yangtse is no exception. For me, the main tourist spots along this river (such as Baidicheng) were not as inviting as the small villages which revealed something of the traditional lifestyles of the region. To meet fishermen and farmers who have known the land and waters here intimately over the decades was fascinating.

At Fengjie the next morning, I was happy to touch land again. The mist over the river had not disappeared and a warm glow from the morning sun lent a special aura to the town's appearance from the wharfside. Along the long steep flight of stairs leading up to the ancient main gate (part of the Ming-dynasty city wall) were

ned sellers with stalls heaped high with peanuts, chilli powder or bright-orange persimmons. There was none of the oppressive urban haze of Chongqing here, and I quickly settled into a local hotel overlooking a school basketball court where a game was in progress. As I wandered about this attractive town, I realized that there were few lone travellers and here, as nearly everywhere I had been in China, people asked me if I knew the art of Indian dancing and whether I had watched any of the classic Indian movies they had enjoyed over the years. It was disappointing to have to tell them that in Hong Kong none of these classics are ever shown in cinemas as they are in China.

After taking a local boat across the muddy Yangtse, I wandered among the large fields planted with peanuts, cabbages, tangerines. Rural life was so appealing – the colours, the smells and the simplicity of moving with the rhythms of nature. One or two families invited me in for some tea and showed me a few of their treasured carvings and boxes. Someone armed with a camera like myself seemed to bring out this instinct in people everywhere.

The next day, leaving Fengjie was easy in that I just hopped onto the next passenger boat but, since I had heard that the town may be submerged if the Three Gorges Dam is built, it was sad to think of this town with its mature air of stability and warmth may disappear.

I had planned to move quickly down to Yichang (a rapidly-developing city upstream of Wuhan) and there take a small local boat to the few fishing villages upriver. However, the boat I caught was a slow one. It stopped at all the small towns and villages along the way – even at locations with no proper piers. Here the bright-orange skin of persimmons littered the golden sandbanks on which people had gathered to wait for the passenger boat.

Our boat headed on, stopping at various towns such as industrial Badong and Zigui, past the entrances to tributaries like the Xiang, and through the famous Three Gorges channel to gradually enter the concrete, organised realm of urban life near Yichang. We sailed through the ship locks of the recently-constructed massive Gezhouba Dam and landed at Yichang in the late evening.

The following day was cool with drizzly overcast weather. A hot spicy breakfast by the docks brought some life back into me and so I moved on to try to locate a boat service which would take me to Sandou-



ping. None of the local boats were going to this particular small village that day, but since a friend had described it to me as being particularly special, I was determined to find a way of reaching it. And eventually I did. A boat captain suggested I take his boat to the next village from Sandouping and then catch a local bus to reach it.

Thankfully this was possible, and for the following three hours we slowly moved upstream against the heavy river's flow. This provided me with a chance to talk to some electrical engineers in my cabin who regularly travel along the Yangtse, moving from city to village on their job. They were very concerned about how I would survive in a small village such as Sandouping without being able to speak fluent Mandarin ... and so spent some time in earnest teaching me the necessary words to find a small guesthouse and some vegetarian food. The weather was still grey and the boat captain was becoming increasingly worried whether the bus service to Sandouping would be functioning. As we approached Sandouping, he suddenly decided to make a surprise stop to let me off the boat. I was very grateful and deeply touched. The engineers passed me a packet of biscuits and some newspapers to keep dry with, and like benevolent grandfathers told me to thank the captain before leaving the boat.

So, into the mist I jumped off the boat onto a thin flimsy wooden pier at Sandouping. The village outline was faintly etched on the grey horizon. Once the boat had moved away I could only see a lone small dark fishing boat floating on the grey-brown, gently rippling waters of the river. I quickly walked into the village, moving past the vegetables glowing green in rows planted along the river's edge. In all honesty, it was an enchanting and mysterious scene.

The first building I came across was the local post office. Simply white walls and wooden doors. Next to it a young man covered in a thick green raincoat and smoking a pipe was bent over working on the hull of a wooden fishing boat. He looked shocked to see me there ... possibly the first Indian he had ever seen. I asked him where I might find a guesthouse and he pointed me off into the direction of the local eating-place. There an elderly lady ushered me off quickly to her home in a motherly fashion. She gave me a towel to dry myself and opened the wooden doors of her guest room for me.

It contained a beautiful four-poster bed with brightly-coloured quilts of traditional

Dinner time crept up swiftly and I spent the evening in her small eating-place. Here many of the villagers gathered to watch television. After dinner she and her husband showed me around her home and her garden planted with tangerine trees and vegetables. I slept very peacefully that night and the next morning was disappointed to find it still raining. I wandered around the quiet muddy village. One elderly man invited me into his house to meet his wife and led me into his back courtyard to see something in a large waterpot. It was a giant salamander – a rare animal in China that he had recently fished from the river and which is supposedly delicious to eat.

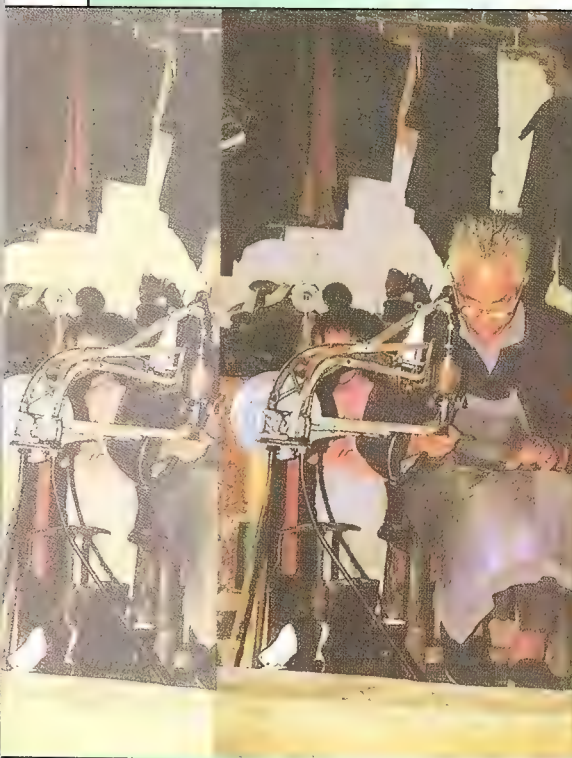
At the back of the village were many

back to Yichang. I was worried whether I would be able to find a night boat for the same day to take me to Yueyang downstream from where I could catch the express train to Guangzhou.

To my relief, a young lady on a bicycle was selling tickets for a boat leaving in an hour. Happy and settled in my bunk bed in fourth class, I started to write my diary. After about an hour I noticed the boat had stopped moving and soon realised, when I saw the large dam structure ahead, that we were waiting to go through the Gezhouba locks. But I was supposed to be travelling downstream, not upstream! After checking with my fellow travellers, I found that my ticket was for Yunyang – a city upstream from Fengjie, which had been my first stop on the Yangtse. That night the fog was thick and I was furious with myself for not checking the ticket properly. Considerably delayed due to the poor weather, we arrived in Badong the next afternoon. Here, the captain arranged for me to change boats to go back downstream to Wuhan. The only seat available was in second class with a group of American tourists. But the luxury of showers and a warm bed was very comforting. I spent the next few hours before dinner talking with a CITS tourist guide who told me of how many times she had been up and down this river already.

Two days later I arrived back in Guangzhou by train and eventually returned to the concrete, sophisticated charms of Hong Kong. Three hours later I picked up my transparencies from a fast-finish photo shop. The colours of the Yangtse's wild gorges and the beautiful mysterious images of Sandouping came back to me on Fuji film. Now I long to return and spend more time exploring other small villages along this 'main street' of China, the Yangtse.

Gayatri Soni



design and a simple wooden bedside table with a lamp to work on. She told me to feel at home and then ran off outside in her wellies to find some hot water. Compared to Yichang, Sandouping was divine. She soon returned and sat down to ask me about my journey in China and about my family in Hong Kong. She found it hilarious that I was travelling alone in the country when I spoke such basic Mandarin ... and sternly warned me that next time I should only consider such adventures when travelling with my husband.

farms and most people looked very healthy and contented. Somehow the advent of the modern urban lifestyle with fast foods and throwaway commodities seemed inappropriate to these peoples' needs.

My time was running out. I had to be back in Hong Kong in three days and so needed to get back to Yichang fast. A local bus took the high road through the hills along the river gorges in the mist and safely brought me



Yunnan's Hengduan Range Area

RAVEL
NOTES



Since much of the territory covered in our major articles in this issue is either expedition country or still closed to foreign visitors, the following is a brief introduction to some of Yunnan's more easily accessible attractions: Kunming, the provincial capital, and Dali and Lijiang, two places of exceptional interest in north-western Yunnan on the approaches to Zhongdian and the Dêqên Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture.

Kunming

Set at 1,890 metres above sea-level, the present-day modern capital of Yunnan Province with a population of around two million has long been known for its mild climate and the beauty of its gardens.

Yuantong Hill This hill and its surroundings in the northwestern part of the city centre have been turned into a park incorporating a temple and a zoo. Built in the Tang dynasty (618-907) and reconstructed several times, the Buddhist **Yuantong Temple** is Kunming's largest. The park contains a large variety of flowers, shrubs and trees in gardens laid out especially to present blooms at every season. Apart from camellias, azaleas and rhododendrons, the park is particularly famous for its show of oriental flowering cherries in the spring.

Yunnan Provincial Museum Significant

exhibits among the museum's superb collections include the *palaeopithecus* fossil unearthed at Jufeng County in Chuxiong Prefecture, teeth fossils of Yuanmou Man (*Homo erectus yuanmouensis*) who lived around 1.7 million years ago, archaeological finds from the Spring and Autumn Periods to the Western Han (770 B.C.-A.D. 24) — notably bronze drums and other bronzeware from the Kingdom of Dian — as well as costumes, handicrafts and artefacts of Yunnan's twenty-four minorities.

Lake Dianchi Lying southwest of the city, forty kilometres long and fourteen kilometres across at its widest point, with an area of some 340 square kilometres, this is the largest lake in Yunnan and the sixth largest in China. It is surrounded by hills and mountains; among them the **Xishan (Western Hill) Scenic Area** fifteen kilometres from the city centre.

Daguan Park Also set by Lake Dianchi two kilometres southwest of Kunming, this is a maze of bridges, winding walkways and pavilions which provides spectacular views over the lake and mountains. It was laid out in 1690 on the instructions of Emperor Kangxi of the Qing dynasty.

Qiongzhu (Bamboo) Temple This is the most popular temple on Yu'an Hill, which

is regarded as Kunming's 'Buddhist mountain' and lies twelve kilometres northwest of the city. Said to date from the Tang dynasty, the temple is famous for its painted clay arhats made by a Sichuan sculptor, Li Guangxiu, and five of his assistants over a seven-year period in the late nineteenth century. There are five hundred of them, each about one metre tall, all lively works of art modelled on real personalities.

Lunan Stone Forest One of China's most famous scenic spots, the Stone Forest is situated about 126 kilometres southeast of Kunming in the Lunan Yi Autonomous County. Covering nearly 30,000 hectares, of which around eighty are open to the public, this rare geological phenomenon features limestone pillars as much as forty metres high in grotesque shapes and formations.

Dali

The capital of the Dali Bai Autonomous Prefecture, set on a plain at 1,900 metres above sea-level around 400 kilometres west of Kunming, this ancient city is attracting increasing numbers of visitors because of its people, the Bai, and the calm beauty of its setting.

Lake Erhai About two kilometres east of Dali, the lake — which has an area of 250 square kilometres — is shaped like a

human ear. Apart from boat trips and good fishing, the lake and its environs offer several historic sights since Dali was the centre of the independent kingdoms of Nanzhao and Dali (732-1253). For example, **Jinsuo (Golden Shuttle) Island** in the lake, where a summer palace once stood, and the **Three Pagodas of Chongsheng Temple**, which have become landmarks of the region. Thirty-five kilometres north of Dali, at the foot of the Cangshan Mountains on the western side of the lake, is **Hudie (Butterfly) Spring**, where thousands of butterflies are said to gather every May.

Cangshan Mountains Extending about fifty kilometres from north to south, the range is known for its beautifully textured marble, the so-called Dali marble, which is much in demand for decorative purposes, as well as its excellent tea. The nineteen peaks of the range, rising to an average of 4,000 metres, provide a lovely backdrop to the Dali Plain and Lake Erhai.

Lijiang

Centre of the traditionally matriarchal Naxi people and of the Lijiang Naxi Autonomous County, this town lies 196 kilometres north of Dali at 2,400 metres above sea-level. It too enjoys a stupendous natural setting.

Yulongxue (Jade Dragon Snow) Mountains The thirteen peaks of this famous southern offshoot of the Hengduan Range rise ten kilometres to the northwest of Lijiang. The main peak, 5,596 metres high, is covered with snow all year round. Towering over the deep gorges of the River Jinsha to the north, the mountains are a botanical treasure chest, producing many of the rare plants and herbs used in traditional Chinese medicine.

Heilong (Black Dragon) Pool The snow-capped peaks of the Yulongxue Mountains

are reflected in this placid pool in the northern part of Lijiang. By its side are some interesting old buildings, including a library and the **Dongba Cultural Research Institute** (a *dongba* was a Naxi shaman, through whom the Naxi culture was passed down). Another is the three-storeyed wooden **Wufeng (Five Phoenix) Hall** which is now a museum displaying Naxi costume and household articles, artefacts of the Dongba culture and Tibetan Buddhism (also strong in Lijiang), as well as relics unearthed in the area. **Hengduan Mountains Natural Botanical Garden** The garden occupies 3.2 square kilometres in Ludian at the eastern foot of the Yunling Range beside the River Jinsha. Despite its relatively small size, the garden shelters an unbelievable variety of plants; it is in fact one of the richest botanical areas in the Hengduan Range.

CAAC Flights Kunming — Baoshan

Route	Days of Week	Dep.	Arr.	Flight No.
Kunming — Baoshan	1 2 3 4 5 6	07:30	08:45	4441
Baoshan — Kunming	1 2 3 4 5 6	09:15	10:22	4442

(Valid summer and autumn, 1989)

Average Climatic Conditions in the Hengduan Mountains

		Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Zhongdian	Temperature (°C)	-3.8	-1.6	1.7	5.2	9.5	12.6	13.2	12.5	11.1	6.5	0.8	-2.9
	Rainfall (mm)	5.4	14.5	19.2	28.1	26.8	86.0	157.5	155.2	72.4	42.4	8.3	4.0
Bijiang	Temperature (°C)	7.6	8.2	10.8	13.0	16.5	18.6	19.3	19.2	18.2	15.2	11.0	8.3
	Rainfall (mm)	36.6	99.8	138.3	140.3	84.3	140.5	148.2	138.7	86.7	80.6	37.3	16.7
Gongshan	Temperature (°C)	7.7	8.4	11.4	13.9	17.9	20.3	21.4	21.3	19.8	15.9	11.2	8.1
	Rainfall (mm)	54.1	145.8	171.5	201.0	129.7	238.2	203.4	157.9	141.1	117.4	52.3	27.1
Fugong	Temperature (°C)	9.5	11.0	13.8	16.3	22.0	22.6	23.6	23.4	22.1	18.5	13.2	9.7
	Rainfall (mm)	45.1	153.1	210.7	214.2	113.5	140.9	126.7	124.4	79.6	94.8	46.3	18.4

(Continued from page 19)

Into the Gorge of the Nujiang

is only that of the average foot. The stems are slung from two steel cables so that they hang low over the river surface.

Less than two kilometres from Bapo we saw one such bridge, about sixty metres long. As we drew near, a woman with a basket on her back came walking along it towards us with the ease of long practice. Taking courage from her example, we too stepped on to the bridge, but didn't expect it to start swaying left and right immediately; the further we went, the more it swayed. The wind was strong and the river splashed and roared below our feet. But it was an exhilarating experience, and we reached the opposite bank without mishap.

Poisoned Arrows and Tattoos

Practically all Drung men are skilled hunters. When we came to one house, we saw wild buffalo and

goat horns hanging on the front wall, trophies that greatly increased our respect for these people. In the opinion of the Drung, the more trophies, the greater the hunter.

Inviting us inside, the man of the house showed us what he hunted with — crossbows and arrows. As I was about to draw an arrow from the quiver, he shouted out: 'Hands off! Be careful, that's lethal!' This kind of arrow, made of sharpened bamboo, has a tiny bamboo slip inserted at the end to steer the direction of flight; the tip is poisoned. It is said that once the poison gets into the bloodstream, it runs through the entire body in a matter of minutes. The blood vessels harden and the heart stops beating almost immediately. A buffalo weighing three hundred kilos will drop dead in less than ten minutes.

Our host added that, apart from hunting, the Drung also fish. In places where the river is fairly clear, they take up position on a bamboo raft and fish with a *qicha*, a rectangular dragnet fastened between two bamboo poles.

Bidding the hunter farewell, we returned to the street. Not long afterwards, hearing the monotonous chant of school children reciting some passage from a textbook, we followed the sound to a single-storeyed building — Bapo's primary school. Several pupils sat on benches listening to their teacher. The open-sided school was poorly equipped and rough; nevertheless, the very fact that children in this out-of-the-way place could get even a modicum of schooling was in itself inspiring.

Face tattoos are rare among China's many ethnic nationalities: the Li of Guangdong Province do this, as do the Drung, but only the women. In the old days, all Drung girls had to have their faces tattooed at puberty. However, the women I saw with tattooed faces along the River Drung were mostly middle-aged or older, so it seems this practice is dying out.

The tattooing process is as follows: first, the outline of the design is drawn between the eyebrows, on the nose and cheeks, and above and below the mouth

using a bamboo slip dipped in soot from the bottom of the cooking pan. Then the designs are 'hammered' into the skin with a needle and a bamboo club. The blood is wiped away and soot solution applied to the tattooed area. After three to five days the scars peel off and the indelible blue-black tattoo is revealed.

I talked to some of the old folk in Bapo to try and find out the origins of this custom. Their stories differed. Some said this was a symbol of beauty and in the past no-one would want to marry a woman whose face was not tattooed. Others believed its purpose was to ward off evil, while others again alleged that the tattoos were distinguishing marks for the various tribes and clans.

After a few days in Bapo, it was time to go back to Gongshan. On the return journey, which proved just as arduous as before, I realized with a sense of loss that I would probably never again set foot in this remote land.

Translated by Ren Jiazhen

CITS Consolidates

China International Travel Service (CITS) has formed a company group to enhance internal cooperation and make it more competitive overall. The new group, which consists of 128 CITS branches and sub-branches, now has links with more than 600 tour operators worldwide. Apparently, CITS head office will handle overseas marketing and sales, while subsidiaries will mainly be involved with ground operations.

CITS has branches in all China's provincial capitals, as well as in cities important in touristic terms. It offers a variety of services including family and commercial tours, pre- and post-conference tours, bicycle tours, hiking tours, study tours, grassland tours, honeymoon tours....

Jade Buddha Consecrated

The Baima (White Horse) Monastery twelve kilometres northeast of Luoyang in central Henan Province was the first Buddhist temple ever built in China. The original building dated from the Yongping reign (58-75) of the Eastern Han dynasty, and was constructed to house the first Buddhist scriptures brought from India.

This March the monastery celebrated the appointment of a new abbot, Master Hai Fa, who has served there since 1959. At the same time a jade Buddha 1.56 metres high and weighing 1.5 tons, donated by an Overseas Chinese from Burma, was consecrated. The monastery also recently held a special admonition ceremony — the first such since the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) — involving around 500 Buddhist monks.

Cosmic Rays in Tibet

Tibet is becoming ever more important for scientists studying the origin of cosmic rays and the structure of the universe. Over the past decade physicists from the Institute of High-Energy Physics, which comes under the Chinese Academy of Sciences, have built a station for observing and recording cosmic rays on Mount Kambala, 5,500 metres above sea-level. Valuable information relating to superhigh-energy interaction and high-energy astrophysics has reportedly been collected, including some phenomena never seen before.

Historical Atlas Published

The result of nearly thirty-five years' work, the eight-volume *Historical Atlas of China* has just been completed. It depicts China's ups and downs, shifting boundaries, feudal dynasties and minority kingdoms throughout the 5,000 years of its history from the Stone Age onwards. The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences has hailed it as marking a 'new era in China's history, history-geography and history-mapping sciences'.

Among other things it records changes in the Great Wall, mountain passes, courier staging posts, border checkpoints, etc.

Military Academy New Tourist Draw

Huangpu (Whampoa), a major port in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, is now starting to make an appearance on tour circuits — or at least its military academy is. The famous Whampoa Military Academy is located on Changzhou Island about twenty kilometres southeast of Guangzhou's city centre. It was established in 1924 by Dr Sun Yat-sen, father of the 1911 Revolution and founder of the Kuomintang Party. It contains his former residence, and various military monuments are dotted in the hills round about. The site has become a major draw for tourists from Taiwan in particular, as Chiang Kai-shek was once the academy's president.

Air Travel News

On 28 March 1989 the pertinent authorities declared the opening up of a route between Beijing and West Germany's Frankfurt via Siberia. Flights are expected to commence on June 1 this year and should reduce the current flying time (15½ hours) by half.

Another new international flight has been started by Air China between Singapore and Xiamen in Fujian Province, with an extension to Beijing. Boeing 767s will be used for the weekly flight, which departs Xiamen for Singapore on Saturday and returns to Xiamen on Sunday.

Also to be launched this June is a new air route between Ürümqi, capital of China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, and Alma-Ata, capital of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic. The Chinese and Soviet authorities will be offering one or two flights per week on this route.

Beijing Zoo's Baby Boom

This year should be a booming one for the inmates of the Beijing Zoo, China's largest, located in the northwestern part of the capital. The zoo's animal-breeding team expects around four hundred babies of one hundred species. Special groups of experts have been assembled to keep a close watch on breeding animals. Special care has also been provided for rare species such as the giant panda, lesser panda, golden monkey, Manchurian tiger, South China tiger, and red-crested crane.

New Computer-Controlled Locomotive

The Dalian Locomotive and Rolling Stock Works in Liaoning Province recently produced China's first diesel locomotive incorporating microcomputer-controlled technology from the United States.

Named the Dongfeng 6, this new model can reach speeds of 118 kilometres per hour and is more powerful than the Dongfeng 4B, the current main engine in use on China's railway system.

Historic Sites Open in Capital

A number of Beijing's historic structures will be open to visitors this year, among them the Zhengyangmen Gate Tower in Tian'anmen Square, the Dongbianmen Corner Tower east of Beijing Railway Station, the Taihe Hall at Taoranting (Temple of Agriculture), and the Ming-dynasty Zhihua Temple.

The Beijing Administration for the Protection of Cultural Relics intends to declare a large number of cultural relics off bounds for construction work and conduct a survey on the enforcement of the law regarding relics protection.

National Arts Festival in Guizhou

Guizhou's first National Arts Festival will take place in late August this year. The principal venue for the happenings will be Guiyang, the provincial capital, with secondary centres in Anshun, Kaili, and a number of other tourist spots. Various events including processions of minority peoples in national dress, exhibitions of painting, calligraphy, photography, local arts, customs and handicrafts, films and books, etc. will be staged. There will also be demonstrations of the famous local batik-making and embroidery, as well as gymnastics contests and a special 'Food Street'.

Second International Acrobatic Festival

After the success of the first event (see CHINA TOURISM no. 100), professional acrobats from around the world have been invited to participate in the second China Wujiao International Acrobatic Festival. It will be held in Shijiazhuang, capital of Hebei Province, from November 1 to 7 1989, and a trade fair will be staged at the same time. Troupes from the Soviet Union, the USA, Britain, Spain, Portugal, Poland, the German Democratic Republic, North Korea, the Philippines, Malaysia and Taiwan are among those invited.

NEXT ISSUE

As a salute to nine years of **CHINA TOURISM**, we follow Chinese writers and photographers on a selection of travels the length and breadth of China — many of them long, hard journeys which pushed the participants to the limit — through an astonishing variety of climate and terrain:

- **China: An Aerial View**
- **By Motorbike Along China's Borders**
- **To the Great Bend in Inner Mongolia**
- **Living Beside the Huanghe**
- **Amid Snow and Ice: Life in the A'nyemaqên Mountains**

Join us in a celebration of China's diversity!



China's First Money Museum

Due to open late this spring in Suzhou, Jiangsu Province, the Suzhou National Treasure Museum of Money and Coins will be a first for China. The museum's collections include coins and other forms of currency — of shell, bone, cloth, paper, copper, gold and silver. Exhibits date from the Eastern Zhou dynasty (770-207 B.C.) to the present time.

Chengde's Puren Monastery

Puren (Universal Love) Monastery in Chengde, the former imperial summer resort in northeastern Hebei Province, will open to the public this June. Founded in 1713 under Emperor Kangxi of the Qing dynasty, it covers an area of 30,000 square metres and displays typical traditional Han Chinese architecture.

Airline Developments

Northwest China Airways has now officially been established in Xi'an, Shaanxi Province. This is one of the six major state-owned airlines announced recently. It will operate flights to thirty-one Chinese cities on thirty routes. The company will also run charter flights between Hong Kong and Xi'an.

This June, an airline corporation is also being established in Hainan Province with the approval of the CAAC and the provincial government. This new airline will operate on both international and domestic routes. Extra airports are being built and the airport in Haikou, the provincial capital, has already been upgraded and expanded. Since the establishment of Hainan as a full province and as China's largest special economic zone, there are now direct flights to Guangzhou, Beijing, Shanghai, Chengdu, Kunming and Shenyang. There are also charter flights to Hong Kong, Singapore and Bangkok.

CAAC Insurance

Starting May 1 1989, the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) is to offer special accident insurance to Chinese and foreign passengers on all domestic flights. Passengers can apply for the insurance at airline booking offices and at all airport terminals in China.

Pilgrims from Overseas

As a result of China's general opening up, in religion as in matters economic, the region around Shantou and Chaozhou in eastern Guangdong Province has become a target for tourists and pilgrims since 1986, particularly for people from Hong Kong and Bangkok. Last year famous sites such as the Tang-dynasty Kaiyuan Temple and the Lingshan Temple in Chaozhou received more than 100,000 visitors. In fact there are over a thousand religious buildings in this region, one or two to every village.

Hotel Update

The **Jianguo Hotel** in Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, which opened on March 12 this year, offers 700 well-appointed rooms and suites in varying sizes. It has six food and beverage outlets, including a Chinese restaurant and a gourmet Western restaurant. Other facilities include extensive conference and banqueting areas, a business centre, heated indoor swimming pool and health centre, valet shop, barber's and beauty salon. The hotel, under the same management as its sister hotel in Beijing, is conveniently located on the edge of the old walled city 25 minutes from the airport.

Far to the south, in Fujian, two new hotels have opened recently in the Wuyi Mountains in the north of the province. The **Hotel Wangfang** and **Hotel Sangu** are sited facing the Dawang, Yunü and Sangu Peaks, convenient for visitors to the scenic area. A third, the **Yunü Hotel**, is still under construction. These hotels offer bar, discotheque, and sundry other entertainment facilities.

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T/C cloth comes in various categories including grey, white, dyed, printed, yarn-dyed, etc. Available are varieties of sheeting, shirting, lawn, poplin, voile, seersucker, Oxford, tussore, jean, drill, dobby, sateen and corduroy, etc.

The printed, dyed and yarn-dyed Trueran fabrics present attractive designs, colour brilliancy and a large selection of shades, thus creating an elegant style. With resin-, permanent press-, water-repellent and silky finish, the fabrics feel crisp, glossy, soft and comfortable. They have won great popularity among customers and are best sellers all over the world. Requests for samples and quotations are welcome.

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B. SHOES DEPT.

Embroidered slippers, cotton shoes, espadrilles, kung fu shoes, rubber shoes, sports shoes, leather shoes, etc.

C. EVERYDAY HANDICRAFTS DEPT.

Umbrellas, cases, bags, cotton rugs, towels, human hair, traditional Chinese stationery, Chinese musical instruments, etc.

D. FURNITURE DEPT.

Blackwood furniture, lacquered furniture, carved furniture, steel furniture, wooden furniture, wooden wares, decorations for Chinese restaurants, etc.

E. STRAW, BAMBOO, RATTAN, WILLOW PLAITED PRODUCTS DEPT.

Straw hats, straw mats, straw products, plaited products made from jute, bamboo, rattan and willow, wall paper, wooden bead cushions, etc.

F. GIFT DEPT.

Souvenirs for X'mas, wooden pyramids, coloured wooden ducks, plush toys, cotton thread products, jewellery cabinets and boxes, fans, stone carvings, beaded articles, painted egg shells, etc.

G. ARTISTIC HANDICRAFTS DEPT.

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Cable: "ARTSCRAFTS" SHANGHAI

Telex: 33053-ARTEX CN

Fax: 021-291871



碓石塊

規格：	碓化鈣	二氧化硅
一級	85%以上	6%以下
二級	80%以上	8%以下
三級	75%以上	24%以下

粒度：0-25mm佔90%以上。

包裝：散裝。

用途：用於煉鋼，化工，陶瓷，玻璃，煉鋁等工業。

FLUORSPAR IN LUMPS

Specification:	CaF ₂	SiO ₂
I	85% min	6% max
II	80% min	8% max
III	75% min	24% max

Size: 0-25 mm on 90% min.

Packing: In bulk.

Uses: Used in the industry of iron fusing, chemistry, ceramic, glass and aluminium fusing, etc

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化學成份：三氧化二鋁 53-55% 碳酸鈣 32-35%
三氧化二鐵 3%以下 二氧化硅 7%以下
氧化鎂 1.5%以下

物理性能：細度(篩分析，通過80微米) 90%(最小)

初凝時間：40分(最小)

終凝時間：10小時

耐火度：>SK15(1430°C)

標號：500#，600#，700#

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Chemical content:

Al ₂ O ₃	CaO	Fe ₂ O ₃	SiO ₂	MgO
53-55%	32-35%	3% max	7% max	1.5% max

Physical properties:

Fineness (SWE analysis through 80m) 90% min. Initial setting time 40 minutes min. Final setting time 10 hours max. Pyrometric cone equivalent >SK15 (1430°C)

Size: No. 500/600/700



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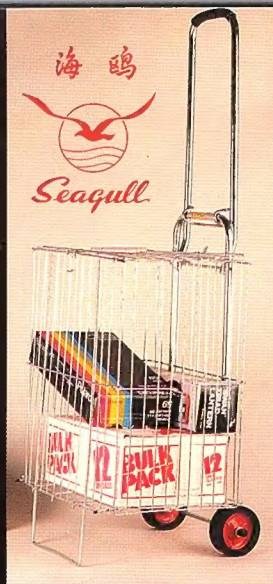
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